VENICE PRESERV'D

OTWAY, THOMAS, 1652-1685

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Venice Preserv'd

BY

THOMAS OTWAY.

Edited from the original quarto of 1682, *without excision, by*

ROWLAND STRONG.

Printed by William Pollard, *Exeter.*
1885.
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One Shilling and Sixpence.

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PREFACE.

The Editor's chief object has been to reprint accurately the text of "Venice Preserved" from the first edition of 1682. He has added an analysis of the plot and an annotated version of the personæ dramatis. These lay claim to neither critical nor historical significance. Constituting a rough sketch of the principal characters in their relation to each other, they have been written in the hope of pointing out such particulars as may, possibly, prove of service to the reader on a first perusal of the play.

In the preparation of the text the old spelling has been adhered to, and the original capitals have been retained. The original capitals, as they obviously represent a rough system of emphasis, may serve to a clearer understanding of the play. The author himself may have arranged them as they stand in the quarto of 1682. At all events they were considered sufficiently important to be reproduced with creditable care, almost accuracy, by the printers of the second quarto of 1696.

There is but one more point upon which the Editor wishes to write a word of explanation. He is aware that in popular reprints of old English literature, especially of Restoration drama, plentiful excisions are demanded by the public. It is now quite customary to remove from the common acquaintance those plainnesses of speech, &c., which were once honestly written, and so forth. This practice as a disinterested tribute to conventional ideas deserves praise, but the Editor has decided not to adopt it in his own reprints, because he fails to see why the literature of one period of time is less worthy of respect than the social conventions of another.

ANALYSIS.

Persons Represented.

Priuli. A Venetian Senator; father of *Belvidera*; a cruel and egotistical old man.

Jaffeir. HERO; husband of *Belvidera*, and *Priuli's* former protégé.

Pierre. A chief conspirator in the plot to overthrow Venice; the friend of *Jaffeir.*

Belvidera. HEROINE; daughter of *Priuli*, and *Jaffeir's wife.*

Antonio. "A wretched, old but itching Senator;" in love with *Aquilina*; said to be a portrait of Antony, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury.

Aquilina. A Grecian courtezan; once betrothed to *Pierre*, but now the mistress of Antonio.

Renault. A chief conspirator in the plot; appointed the guardian of *Belvidera* whom he attempts to seduce.

Conspirators.

Duke of Venice.

Guards, *&c.*

Jaffeir has rescued Belvidera from drowning. The girl's gratitude develops into love, and she marries the young gentleman without her father's consent. Priuli, enraged that his wishes have not been consulted, renounces both his daughter and her husband, and persecutes them with relentless malignity. For a few years Jaffeir struggles with his fate. Overcome at last by poverty he appeals to Priuli for help. He is angrily and contemptuously refused. Here the dramatic action of the tragedy begins. Bent on revenge and embittered by his abject condition—his property in the hands of creditors, and his wife without a home—Jaffeir yields to the persuasions of Pierre, and joins a plot to massacre the Senate and reconstitute the Government of Venice. As a hostage for his good faith he commits Belvidera to the custody of Renault, together with a dagger, which Renault is to plunge into her heart should Jaffeir turn traitor to the cause. Renault, an arrant villain, takes advantage of this trust to enter Belvidera's room at night and to insult her with disgraceful proposals, and although those are so loudly resisted that he is obliged to withdraw, he abandons his design for the present only, determined to despatch her husband as soon as possible that he may take advantage of her subsequent defencelessness.

In the meantime Jaffeir, who has agreed to isolate himself from Belvidera until the plot has been brought to a successful issue, finds his self-

imposed celibacy unendurable, and comes to seek his wife. She receives him coldly, accuses him of deserting her, and, at last, by an artful combination of flattery and dark hints wrings from him the secret of her situation. When she learns that the murder of Priuli is intended, the filial love she still retains prompts her at all hazards to save her father's life. To this end she details the conduct of Renault, and states her fear that, in the mellay of the projected slaughter, Jaffeir may be treacherously assassinated, and Renault find himself at liberty to prosecute his vile intent.

Thus Jaffeir is left with only one sure means of protecting his wife's honour—the revelation of the plot.

The Senate is accordingly informed of the approaching danger. The arrest of the conspirators follows, and Jaffeir, after exacting an oath from the Senate that certain of his friends, including Pierre, shall be spared, appears as the accusing witness. Pierre is at first unable to realise that the informer is his old friend ; but at length, convinced of Jaffeir's guilt, he refuses, in a transport of rage, to listen to his excuses, scorns the assurance that his own life is secured, strikes Jaffeir, and calls him slave. This so cuts Jaffeir to the heart that he begins to repent of the information he has given ; but when he learns from Belvidera that the oath of the Senate is broken, and Pierre condemned to die, he wishes to stab her, that he may himself fulfil the penalty of his faithlessness. Belvidera, however, throws her arms about his neck and kisses him, and he, utterly unmanned by her love, changes his mind, calls himself a coward, and bids her save his friend by a personal appeal to Priuli.

Attired in weeds of deep mourning, Belvidera now approaches her father and intreats his forgiveness and help. Priuli makes a faint effort to preserve his old attitude of righteous indignation. He fails, succumbing like Jaffeir to the irresistible charms of his fascinating suppliant: but all his intercessions with the Senate are in vain. The sentence on Pierre is confirmed.

When Jaffeir is made acquainted with this sad news he solemnly blesses Belvidera, commanding her to bring up their little boy in ignorance of his father's story. Then he bids her an eternal farewell, and she is led away, raving with grief, by one of Priuli's maids.

The melancholy parting over, Jaffeir repairs to the scaffold where Pierre is to die. There he is lovingly reconciled to his old friend, whose last wish, to be saved from a shameful death, he promises to fulfil. The time for the execution draws near. Pierre is stript and bound to the wheel. At this instant Jaffeir rushes forward and stabs Pierre to the heart. Then, with the same dagger, he stabs himself, and dies, sobbing out with his last breath a bitter execration on the Venetian Senate. Belvidera and Priuli hurry to the spot. The ghosts of Pierre and Jaffeir rise bloody before them and sink. Belvidera, tearing furiously at the ground to reach her husband, dies in a fit of agonizing grief, and Priuli is led from the scene, dazed and helpless, and muttering a few words of remorse and despair.

Venice Preserv'd,

OR,

A Plot Discover'd.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

DUKE'S THEATRE.

Written by *THOMAS OTWAY.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Jos. Hindmarsh* at the sign of the Black Bull, over against the Royal Exchange in *Cornhill*, 1682.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To Her GRACE the

DUTCHESS

OF

PORTSMOUTH.

MADAM,

WERE it possible for me to let the World know how entirely your Graces Goodness has devoted a poor man to your service; were there words enough in speech to express the mighty sense I have of your great bounty towards me; surely I should write and talk of it for ever: But your Grace has given me so large a Theam, and laid so very vast a foundation, that Imagination wants stock to build upon it. I am as one dumb when I would speak of it, and when I strive to write, I want a scale of thought sufficient to comprehend the height of it. Forgive me then, Madam, *if (as a poor Peasant once made a Present of an Apple to an Emperour) I bring this small Tribute, the humble growth of my little Garden, and lay it at your feet. Believe it is paid you with the utmost gratitude, believe that so long as I have thought to remember, how very much I owe your generous Nature, I will ever have a heart that shall be gratefull for it too: Your Grace, next Heaven, deserves it amply from me; That gave me life, but on a hard condition, till your extended favour taught me to prize the gift, and took the heavy burthen it was clogg'd with from me: I mean hard Fortune: When I had enemies, that with malitious power kept back and shaded me from those Royal Beams, whose warmth is all I have, or hope to live by; Your noble pity and compassion found me, where I was far cast backward from my blessing; down in the rear of Fortune, call'd me up, plac'd me in the shine, and I have felt its comfort. You have in that restor'd me to my native Right, for a steady Faith, and Loyalty to my Prince, was all the Inheritance my Father left me, and however hardly my ill Fortune deal with me, 'tis what I prize so well that I ne'r pawn'd it yet, and hope I ne'r*

shall part with it. Nature and Fortune were certainly in league when you were born, and as the first took care to give you beauty enough to enslave the hearts of all the World, so the other resolv'd to doe its merit Justice, that none but a Monarch, fit to rule that world, should e'r possess it, and in it he had an Empire. The young Prince you have given him, by his blooming Vertues, early declares the mighty stock he came from; and as you have taken all the pious care of a dear Mother and a prudent Guardian to give him a noble and generous education; may it succeed according to his merits and your wishes: May he grow up to be a Bulwark to his illustrious Father, and a Patron to his Loyal Subjects, with Wisedom and Learning to assist him, whenever call'd to his Councils, to defend his right against the encroachments of Republicans in his Senates, to cherish such men as shall be able to vindicate the Royal Cause, that good and fit servants to the Crown, may never be lost for want of a Protectour. May He have courage and conduct, fit to fight his Battels abroad, and terrifie his Rebells at home; and that all these may be yet more sure, may He never, during the Spring-time of his years, when those growing Vertues ought with care to be cherish'd, in order to their ripening; may he never meet with vitious Natures, or the tongues of faithless, sordid, insipid Flatterers, to blast 'em: To conclude; may He be as great as the hand of Fortune (with his Honour) shall he be able to make him: And may your Grace, who are so good a Mistress, and so noble a Patroness, never meet with a less gratefull Servant, than,

Madam,

Your Graces entirely
Devoted Creature,
Thomas Otway.

PROLOGUE.

IN these distracted times, when each man dreads
The bloudy stratagems of busie heads;
When we have fear'd three years we know not what,
Till Witnesses began to die o'th' rot,
What made our Poet meddle with a Plot?
Was't that he fansy'd, for the very sake
And name of Plot, his trifling Play might take?
For there's not in't one Inch-board Evidence,
But 'tis, he says, to reason plain and sense,
And that he thinks a plausible defence.
Were Truth by Sense and Reason to be tri'd,
Sure all our Swearers might be laid aside:
No, of such Tools our Author has no need,
To make his Plot, or make his Play succeed;
He, of black Bills, has no prodigious Tales,
Or Spanish Pilgrims cast ashore in Wales;
Here's not one murther'd Magistrate at least,
Kept rank like Ven'son for a City feast,
Grown four days stiff, the better to prepare
And fit his plyant limbs to ride in Chair:
Yet here's an Army rais'd, though under ground,
But no man seen, nor one Commission found;
Here is a Traitour too, that's very old,
Turbulent, subtle, mischievous and bold,
Bloudy, revengefull, and to crown his part,
Loves fumbling with a Wench, with all his heart;
Till after having many changes pass'd,
In spight of Age (thanks heaven) is hanged at last:
Next is a Senatour that keeps a Whore,
In Venice *none a higher office bore;*
To lewdness every night the Letcher ran,
Shew me, all London, *such another man,*
Match him at Mother Creswolds *if you can.*
Oh Poland, Poland! *had it been thy lot,*
T' have heard in time of this Venetian Plot,
Thou surely chosen hadst one King from thence,
And honour'd them as thou hast England *since.*

EPILOGUE.

THE Text is done, and now for Application,
And when that's ended pass your Approbation.
Though the Conspiracy's prevented here,
Methinks I see another hatching there;
And there's a certain Faction fain would sway,
If they had strength enough and damn this Play,
But this the Author bad me boldly say:
If any take his plainness in ill part,
He's glad on't from the bottome of his heart;
Poets in honour of the Truth shou'd write,
With the same Spirit brave men for it fight;
And though against him causeless hatreds rise,
And dayly where he goes of late, he spies
The scowles of sullen and revengefull eyes;
'Tis what he knows with much contempt to bear,
And serves a cause too good to let him fear:
He fears no poison from an incens'd Drabb,
No Ruffian's five foot sword, nor Rascal's stab;
Nor any other snares of mischief laid,
Not a Rose-alley Cudgel-Ambuscade,
From any private cause where malice reigns,
Or general Pique all Block-heads have to brains:
Nothing shall daunt his Pen when Truth does call,
*No not the * Picture mangler at* Guild-hall.
The Rebel Tribe, of which that Vermin's one,
Have now set forward and their course begun;
And while that Prince's figure they deface,
As they before had massacred his Name,
Durst their base fears but look him in the face,
They'd use his Person as they've us'd his Fame;
A face, in which such lineaments they reade
Of that great Martyr's, whose rich bloud they shed,
That their rebellious hate they still retain,
And in his Son would murther Him again:
With indignation then, let each brave heart,
Rouse and unite to take his injur'd part;
Till Royal Love and Goodness call him home,
And Songs of Triumph meet him as he come;
Till Heaven his Honour and our Peace restore,
And Villains never wrong his Vertue more.

* *The Rascal that cut the Duke of* York's *Picture.*

Personæ Dramatis.

Duke of *Venice*,		Mr. *D. Williams.*
Priuli, Father to *Belvidera*, a Senatour,		Mr. *Boman.*
Antonio, A fine Speaker in the Senate,		Mr. *Leigh.*
Jaffeir,		Mr. *Betterton.*
Pierre,		Mr. *Smith.*
Renault,	Conspiratours.	Mr. *Wilshire.*
Bedamar,		Mr. *Gillo.*
Spinosa,		Mr. *Percival.*
Theodore,		
Elliot,		
Revillido,		
Durand,		
Mezzana,		
Bramveil,		
Ternon,		
Brabe,		

Belvidera,	Mrs. *Barry.*
Aquilina,	Mrs. *Currer.*

Two Women, Attendants on *Belvidera.*
Two Women, Servants to *Aquilina.*
The Council of Ten.
Officer.
Guards.
Friar.
Executioner and Rable.

VENICE PRESERV'D,

OR,

A Plot Discover'd.

Act I. Scene I.

Enter Priuli *and* Jaffeir.

Priu. NO more! I'le hear no more; begone and leave.*
Jaff. Not hear me! by my sufferings but you shall!
My Lord, my Lord! I'm not that abject wretch
You think me: Patience! where's the distance throws
Me back so far, but I may boldly speak
In right, though proud oppression will not hear mee!
Priu. Have you not wrong'd me?
Jaff. Could my Nature e're
Have brook'd Injustice or the doing wrongs,
I need not now thus low have bent my self,
To gain a Hearing from a Cruel father!
Wrong'd you?
Priu. Yes! wrong'd me, in the nicest point:
The Honour of my House; you have done me wrong;
You may remember: (For I now will speak,
And urge its baseness:) When you first came home
From Travell, with such hopes, as made you lookt on
By all men's Eyes, a Youth of expectation;
Pleas'd with your growing Virtue, I receiv'd you;
Courted, and sought to raise you to your Merits:
My House, my Table, nay my Fortune too,
My very self, was yours; you might have us'd me
To your best service; like an open friend,
I treated, trusted you, and thought you mine;
When in requital of my best Endeavours,
You treacherously practis'd to undo me,
Seduc'd the weakness of my Age's Darling,
My only Child, and stole her from my bosome:
Oh *Belvidera!* *Jaff.*

* 4to 1704 reads "leave me."

Jaff. 'Tis to me you owe her,
Childless you had been else, and in the Grave,
Your name Extinct, nor no more *Priuli* heard of.
You may remember, scarce five years are past,
Since in your Brigandine you sail'd to see
The *Adriatick* wedded by our Duke,
And I was with you: Your unskilfull Pilot
Dash't us upon a Rock; when to your Boat
You made for safety; entred first your self;
The affrighted *Belvidera* following next,
As she stood trembling on the Vessel side,
Was by a Wave washt off into the Deep,
When instantly I plung'd into the Sea,
And buffeting the Billows to her rescue,
Redeem'd her Life with half the loss of mine,
Like a rich Conquest in one hand I bore her,
And with the other dasht the sawcy Waves,
That throng'd and prest to rob me of my prize:
I brought her, gave her to your despairing Arms:
Indeed you thank't me; but a nobler gratitude
Rose in her soul: for from that hour she lov'd me,
Till for her Life she paid me with her self.

Priu. You stole her from me, like a Theif you stole her,
At dead of night; that cursed hour you chose
To rifle me of all my Heart held dear.
May all your Joys in her prove false like mine;
A steril Fortune, and a barren Bed,
Attend you both; Continual discord make
Your Days and Nights bitter and grievous: Still
May the hard hand of a vexatious Need
Oppress, and grind you; till at last you find
The Curse of Disobedience all your Portion.

Jaff. Half of your Curse you have bestow'd in vain,
Heav'n has already crown'd our faithfull Loves
With a young Boy, sweet as his mothers Beauty:
May he live to prove more Gentle than his Grandsire,
And happier than his Father!

Priu. Rather live
To bait thee for his bread, and din your ears
With hungry Cries: Whilst his unhappy Mother
Sits down and weeps in bitterness of want.

Jaff. You talk as if it would please you.

Priu. 'Twould by Heav'n.
Once she was dear indeed; the Drops that fell
From my sad heart, when she forgot her Duty,
The fountain of my Life was not so pretious:
But she is gone, and if I am a man I will

I will forget her.
Jaff. Would I were in my Grave.
Priu. And she too with thee;
For, living here, you're but my curs'd Remembrancers
I once was happy.
Jaff. You use me thus, because you know my soul
Is fond of *Belvidera*: You perceive
My Life feeds on her, therefore thus you treat me;
Oh! could my Soul ever have known satiety:
Were I that Theif, the doer of such wrongs
As you upbraid me with, what hinders me,
But I might send her back to you with Contumely,
And court my fortune where she wou'd be kinder!
Priu. You dare not do't.—
Jaff. Indeed, my Lord, I dare not.
My heart that awes me is too much my Master:
Three years are past since first our Vows were plighted,
During which time, the World must bear me witness,
I have treated *Belvidera* like your Daughter,
The Daughter of a Senator of *Venice;*
Distinction, Place, Attendance and Observance,
Due to her Birth, she always has commanded;
Out of my little Fortune I have done this;
Because (though hopeless e're to win your Nature)
The World might see, I lov'd her for her self,
Not as the Heiress of the great *Priuli.*—
Priu. No more!
Jaff. Yes! all, and then adieu for ever.
There's not a Wretch that lives on common Charity
But's happier than me: for I have known
The Luscious Sweets of Plenty; every night
Have slept with soft content about my head,
And never waked but to a joyfull morning,
Yet now must fall like a full Ear of Corn,
Whose blossom scap'd, yet's withered in the ripening.
Priu. Home and be humble, study to retrench;
Discharge the lazy Vermin of thy Hall,
Those Pageants of thy Folly,
Reduce the glittering Trappings of thy Wife
To humble Weeds, fit for thy little state;
Then to some suburb Cottage both retire;
Drudge, to feed loathsome life: Get Brats, and Starve—
Home, home, I say.— [*Exit* Priuli.
Jaff. Yes, if my heart would let me—
This proud, this swelling heart: Home I would go,
But that my Dores are hatefull to my eyes.
Fill'd and damm'd up with gaping Creditors, Watchful

Watchful as Fowlers when their Game will spring ;
I have now not 50 Ducats in the World,
Yet still I am in love, and pleas'd with Ruin.
Oh *Belvidera*! oh she's my Wife—
And we will bear our wayward Fate together.
But ne're know Comfort more.

Enter Pierrè.

Pierr. My Friend good morrow!
How fares the honest Partner of my Heart?
What, melancholy! not a word to spare me?
Jaff. I'm thinking *Pierrè*, how that damn'd starving Quality
Call'd Honesty, got footing in the World.
Pierr. Why, pow'rfull Villainy first set it up,
For its own ease and safety: Honest men
Are the soft easy Cushions on which Knaves
Repose and fatten: Were all mankind Villains,
They'd starve each other; Lawyers wou'd want practice,
Cut-Throats Rewards: Each man would kill his Brother
Himself, none would be paid or hang'd for Murder:
Honesty was a Cheat invented first
To bind the Hands of bold deserving Rogues,
That Fools and Cowards might sit safe in Power,
And lord it uncontroul'd above their Betters.
Jaff. Then Honesty is but a Notion.
Pierr. Nothing else,
Like wit, much talkt of, not to be defin'd:
He that pretends to most too, has least share in't;
'Tis a ragged Virtue: Honesty! no more on't.
Jaff. Sure thou art Honest?
Pierr. So indeed men think me?
But they're mistaken *Jaffeir*: I am a Rogue
As well as they;
A fine gay bold fac'd Villain, as thou seest me;
'Tis true, I pay my debts when they'r contracted;
I steal from no man; would not cut a Throat
To gain admission to a great man's purse,
Or a Whores bed; I'de not betray my Friend,
To get his Place or Fortune: I scorn to flatter
A Blown-up Fool above me, or Crush the wretch beneath me,
Yet, *Jaffeir*, for all this, I am a Villain!
Jaff. A Villain—
Pierr. Yes a most notorious Villain:
To see the suffring's of my fellow Creatures,
And own my self a Man: To see our Senators
Cheat the deluded people with a shew
Of Liberty, which yet they ne're must taste of;

They say, by them our hands are free from Fetters,
Yet whom they please they lay in basest bonds ;
Bring whom they please to Infamy and Sorrow ;
Drive us like Wracks down the rough Tide of Power,
Whilst no hold's left to save us from Destruction ;
All that bear this are Villains; and I one,
Not to rouse up at the great Call of Nature,
And check the Growth of these Domestick spoilers,
That makes us slaves and tells us 'tis our Charter.
Jaff. Oh *Aquilina !* Friend, to lose such Beauty,
The Dearest Purchase of thy noble Labours ;
She was thy Right by Conquest, as by Love.
Pierr. Oh *Jaffeir* ! I'de so fixt my heart upon her,
That wheresoe're I fram'd a Scheme of Life
For time to come, she was my only Joy
With which I wisht to sweeten future Cares ;
I fancy'd pleasures, none but one that loves
And dotes as I did can Imagine like 'em :
When in the Extremity of all these Hopes,
In the most Charming hour of Expectation,
Then when our Eager Wishes soar the highest,
Ready to stoop and grasp the lovely Game,
A Haggard Owl, a Worthless Kite of Prey,
With his foul wings sayl'd in and spoyl'd my Quarry.
Jaff. I know the Wretch, and scorn him as thou hat'st him.
Pierr. Curse on the Common Good that's so protected.
Where every slave that heaps up wealth enough
To do much Wrong, becomes a Lord of Right :
I, who beleiv'd no Ill could e're come near me,
Found in the Embraces of my *Aquilina*
A Wretched old but itching Senator ;
A wealthy Fool, that had bought out my Title,
A Rogue, that uses Beauty like a Lambskin,
Barely to keep him warm : That filthy Cuckoo too
Was in my absence crept into my Nest,
And spoyling all my Brood of noble Pleasure.
Jaff. Did'st thou not chace him thence ?
Pierr. I did, and drove
The rank old bearded *Hirco* stinking home :
The matter was complain'd of in the Senate,
I summon'd to appear, and censur'd basely,
For violating something they call *priviledge*—
This was the Recompence of my service :
Would I'd been rather beaten by a Coward !
A Souldier's Mistress *Jaffeir*'s his Religion,
When that's prophan'd, all other Tyes are broken,
That even dissolves all former bonds of service,

And from that hour I think my self as free
To be the Foe as e're the Friend of *Venice*—
Nay, Dear Revenge, when e're thou call'st I am ready.
Jaff. I think no safety can be here for Virtue,
And grieve my Friend as much as thou to live
In such a wretched State as this of *Venice*;
Where all agree to spoil the Publick Good,
And Villains fatten with the brave man's Labours.
Pierr. We have neither safety, Unity, nor Peace,
For the foundation's lost of Common Good;
Justice is lame as well as blind amongst us;
The Laws (corrupted to their ends that make 'em)
Serve but for Instruments of some new Tyranny,
That every day starts up to enslave us deeper:
Now could this glorious Cause but find out friends
To do it right! oh *Jaffeir*! then might'st thou
Not wear these seals of Woe upon thy Face,
The proud *Priuli* should be taught humanity,
And learn to value such a son as thou art
I dare not speak! But my heart bleeds this moment!
Jaff. Curst be the Cause, though I thy friend be part on't:
Let me partake the troubles of thy bosom,
For I am us'd to misery, and perhaps
May find a way to sweeten't to thy spirit.
Pierr. Too soon it will reach thy knowledg—
Jaff. Then from thee
Let it proceed. There's Virtue in thy Friendship
Would make the saddest Tale of sorrow pleasing,
Strengthen my Constancy, and welcome Ruin.
Pierr. Then thou art ruin'd!
Jaff. That I long since knew,
I and ill Fortune have been long Acquaintance.
Pierr. I past this very moment by thy dores,
And found them guarded by a Troop of Villains;
The sons of public Rapine were destroying:
They told me, by the sentence of the Law
They had Commission to seize all thy fortune,
Nay more, *Priuli*'s cruel hand hath sign'd it.
Here stood a Ruffian with a horrid face
Lording it o're a pile of massy Plate,
Tumbled into a heap for publick sale:
There was another making villainous jests
At thy undoing; he had ta'ne possession
Of all thy antient most domestick Ornaments,
Rich hangings, intermixt and wrought with gold;
The very bed, which on thy wedding-night
Receiv'd thee to the Arms of *Belvidera*,

The scene of all thy Joys, was violated
By the course hands of filthy Dungeon Villains,
And thrown amongst the common Lumber,
Jaff. Now thanks Heaven—
Pierr. Thank Heaven! for what?
Jaff. That I am not worth a Ducat.
Pierr. Curse thy dull Stars, and the worse Fate of *Venice*,
Where Brothers, Friends, and Fathers, all are false;
Where there's no trust, no truth; where Innocence
Stoop's under vile Oppression; and Vice lords it:
Hadst thou but seen, as I did, how at last
Thy Beauteous *Belvidera*, like a Wretch
That's doom'd to Banishment, came weeping forth,
Shining through Tears, like *April* Sun's in showers
That labour to o'recome the Cloud that loads 'em,
Whilst two young Virgins, on whose Arms she lean'd,
Kindly lookt up, and at her Grief grew sad,
As if they catcht the Sorrows that fell from her:
Even the lewd Rabble that were gather'd round
To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld her;
Govern'd their roaring throats and grumbled pity:
I cou'd have hugg'd the greazy Rogues: They pleas'd me.
Jaff. I thank thee for this story from my soul,
Since now I know the worst that can befall me:
Ah *Pierre!* I have a Heart, that could have born
The roughest Wrong my Fortune could have done me:
But when I think what *Belvidera* feels,
The bitterness her tender spirit tasts of,
I own myself a Coward: Bear my weakness,
If throwing thus my Arms about thy Neck,
I play the Boy, and blubber in thy bosome.
Oh! I shall drown thee with my Sorrows!
Pierr. Burn!
First burn, and Level *Venice* to thy Ruin,
What starve like Beggars Brats in frosty weather,
Under a Hedge, and whine our selves to Death!
Thou, or thy Cause, shall never want assistance,
Whilst I have Blood or Fortune fit to serve thee;
Command my heart: Thou art every way its master.
Jaff. No: there's a secret Pride in bravely dying.
Pierr. Rats die in Holes and Corners, Dogs run mad;
Man knows a braver Remedy for sorrow:
Revenge! the Attribute of Gods, they stampt it
With their great Image on our Natures; dye!
Consider well the Cause that calls upon thee:
And if thou art base enough, dye then: Remember
Thy *Belvidera* suffers: *Belvidera!*

Dye—Damn first—what be decently interr'd
In a Church-yard, and mingle thy brave dust
With stinking Rogues that rot in dirty winding-sheets,
Surfeit-slain Fools, the common Dung o' th' Soyl.
Jaff. Oh!
Pierr. Well said, out with't, Swear a little—
Jaff. Swear!
By Sea and Air! by Earth, by Heaven and Hell,
I will revenge my *Belvidera*'s Tears!
Heark thee my Friend—*Priuli*—is— a Senator!
Pierr. A Dog!
Jaff. Agreed.
Pierr. Shoot him.
Jaff. With all my heart.
No more: Where shall we meet at Night?
Pierr. I'l tell thee;
On the *Ryalto* every Night at Twelve
I take my Evening's walk of Meditation,
There we two will meet, and talk of pretious
Mischief—
Jaff. Farewel.
Pierr. At Twelve.
Jaff. At any hour, my plagues.
Will keep me waking. [Ex. *Pierr.*
Tell me why, good Heav'n,
Thou mad'st me what I am, with all the Spirit,
Aspiring thoughts and Elegant desires
That fill the happiest Man? Ah! rather why
Did'st thou not form me sordid as my Fate,
Base minded, dull, and fit to carry Burdens?
Why have I sence to know the Curse that's on me?
Is this just dealing, Nature? *Belvidera!* [*Enter Belvidera.*
Poor *Belvidera!*
Belvid. Lead me, lead me my Virgins!
To that kind Voice. My Lord, my Love, my Refuge!
Happy my Eyes, when they behold thy Face:
My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating
At sight of thee, and bound with sprightful joys.
Oh smile, as when our Loves were in their Spring,
And cheer my fainting Soul.
Jaff. As when our Loves
Were in their Spring? has then my Fortune chang'd?
Art thou not *Belvidera*, still the same,
Kind, good, and tender, as my Arms first found thee?
If thou art alter'd, where shall I have harbour?
Where ease my loaded Heart? Oh! where complain?
Belv. Does this appear like Change, or Love decaying? When

When thus I throw my self into thy bosom.
With all the resolution of a strong Truth:
Beats not my heart, as 'twou'd alarm thine
To a new Charge of bliss; I joy more in thee,
Than did thy Mother when she hugg'd thee first,
And bless'd the Gods for all her Travel past.
Jaff. Can there in Women be such glorious Faith?
Sure all ill-stories of thy Sex are false;
Oh Woman! lovely Woman! Nature made thee
To temper Man: We had been Brutes without you,
Angels are Painted fair, to look like you;
There's in you all that we believe of Heav'n,
Amazing Brightness, Purity and Truth,
Eternal Joy, and everlasting Love.
Belv. If Love be Treasure, wee'l be wondrous rich;
I have so much, my heart will surely break with't;
Vows cannot express it, when I wou'd declare
How great's my Joy, I am dumb with the big thought;
I swell, and sigh, and labour with my longing.
Oh lead me to some Desart wide and wild,
Barren as our Misfortunes, where my Soul
May have its vent: Where I may tell aloud
To the high Heaven's, and every list'ning Planet,
With what a boundless stock my bosom's fraught;
Where I may throw my eager Arms about thee,
Give loose to Love with kisses, kindling Joy,
And let off all the Fire that's in my Heart.
Jaff. Oh *Belvidera!* double I am a Begger,
Undone by Fortune, and in debt to thee;
Want! worldly Want! that hungry meager Fiend
Is at my heels, and chaces me in view;
Can'st thou bear Cold and Hunger? Can these Limbs,
Fram'd for the tender Offices of Love,
Endure the bitter Gripes of smarting Poverty?
When banisht by our miseries abroad,
(As suddenly we shall be) to seek out
(In some far Climate where our Names are strangers)
For charitable succour; wilt thou then,
When in a Bed of straw we shrink together,
And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads;
Wilt thou then talk thus to me? Wilt thou then
Hush my Cares thus, and shelter me with Love?
Belv. Oh I will love thee, even in Madness love thee.
Tho my distracted senses should forsake me,
I'd find some intervals, when my poor heart
Should swage it self and be let loose to thine.
Though the bare Earth be all our Resting-place,

It's Root's our food, some Clift our Habitation,
I'l make this Arm a Pillow for thy Head;
As thou sighing ly'st, and swell'd with sorrow,
Creep to thy Bosom, pou'r the balm of Love
Into thy Soul, and kiss thee to thy Rest;
Then praise our God, and watch thee 'till the Morning.
Jaff. Hear this you Heav'ns, and wonder how you made her!
Reign, reign ye Monarchs that divide the World,
Busy Rebellion ne're will let you know
Tranquility and Happiness like mine;
Like gawdy Ships, th' obsequious Billows fall
And rise again, to lift you in your Pride;
They wait but for a storm and then devour you:
I, in my private Bark, already wreck't,
Like a poor Merchant driven on unknown Land,
That had by chance packt up his choicest Treasure
In one dear Casket, and sav'd only that:
Since I must wander further on the shore,
Thus hug my little, but my precious store;
Resolv'd to scorn, and trust my Fate no more. [*Exeunt.*

Act II.

Enter Pierre *and Aquilina.*

Aquil. BY all thy Wrongs, (thou art dearer to my Arms
Than all the Wealth of *Venice:*) Prithee stay,
And let us love to Night.
Peirr. No: There's Fool,
There's Fool about thee: When a Woman sells
Her Flesh to Fools, her Beauty's lost to me;
They leave a Taint, a sully where th'ave past,
There's such a baneful Quality about 'em,
Even spoyls Complexions with their own Nauseousness.
They infect all they touch; I cannot think
Of tasting any thing a Fool has pall'd.
Aquil. I loath and scorn that Fool thou mean'st, as much
Or more than thou can'st; (But the Beast has Gold
That makes him necessary) Power too,
To qualifie my Character, and poise me
Equal with peevish Virtue, that beholds
My Liberty with Envy: In their hearts
Are loose as I am; But an ugly Power
Sits in their Faces, and frights Pleasures from 'em.
Peirr. Much good may't do you, Madam, with your Senator.

Aquil. My Senator! why, can'st thou think that Wretch
E're fill'd thy *Aquilina's* Arms with Pleasure?
Think'st thou, because I sometimes give him leave
To foyle himself at what he is unfit for;
Because I force my self to endure and suffer him,
Think'st thou I love him? No, by all the Joys
Thou ever gav'st me, his Presence is my Pennance;
The worst thing an old Man can be's a Lover,
A meer *Memento Mori* to poor woman.
I never lay by his decrepit side,
But all that night I ponder'd on my Grave.
Pierr. Would he were well sent thither.
Aquil. That's my wish too:
For then, my *Pierre*, I might have cause with pleasure
To play the Hypocrite: Oh! how I could weep
Over the dying Dotard, and kiss him too,
In hopes to smother him quite; then, when the time
Was come to pay my Sorrows at his Funeral,
For he has already made me Heir to Treasures,
Would make me out-act a real Widows whining:
How could I frame my face to fit my mourning
With wringing hands attend him to his Grave,
Fall swooning on his Hearse: Take mad possession,
Even of the Dismal Vault where he lay bury'd,
There like the *Ephesian* Matron dwell, till Thou,
My lovely Soldier, comest to my Deliverance;
Then throwing up my Veil, with open Armes
And laughing Eyes, run to new dawning Joy.
Pierr. No more! I have Friends to meet me here to Night,
And must be private. As you prize my Friendship
Keep up your Coxcomb: Let him not pry nor listen
Nor fisk about the House as I have seen him,
Like a tame mumping Squirrel with a Bell on
Currs will be abroad to bite him if you do.
Aquil. (What Friends to meet? may I not be of your Council?
Pierr. (How! a Woman ask Questions out of Bed?)
Go to your Senator, ask him what passes
Amongst his Brethren, hee'l hide nothing from you:
But pump not me for Politicks. No more!
Give order that whoever in my name
Comes here, receive Admittance: so good night.
Aquil. Must we ne're meet again! Embrace no more!
Is Love so soon and utterly forgotten!
Pierr. As you hence-forward treat your Fool, I'le think on't.
Aquil. Curst be all Fools, and doubly curst my self,
The worst of Fools—I die if he forsakes me;
And now to keep him, Heav'n or Hell instruct me. [*Exeunt*

SCENE *The Ryalto.*

Enter Jaffeir.

Jaff. I am here, and thus, the Shades of Night around me,
I look as if all Hell were in my Heart,
And I in Hell. Nay, surely 'tis so with me;—
For every step I tread, methinks some Fiend
Knocks at my Breast, and bids it not be quiet:
I've heard, how desperate Wretches, like my self,
Have wander'd out at this dead time of Night
To meet the Foe of Mankind in his walk:
Sure I am so Curst, that, tho' of Heav'n forsaken,
No Minister of Darkness cares to Tempt me.
Hell! Hell! why sleepest thou?

Enter Pierre.

Pierr. Sure I have stay'd too long:
The Clock has struck, and I may lose my Proselyte.
Speak, who goes there?
Jaff. A Dog, that comes to howl!
At yonder Moon: What's he that asks the Question?
Pierr. A Friend to Dogs, for they are honest Creatures,
And ne're betray their Masters; never Fawn
On any that they love not: Well met, Friend:
Jaffeir!
Jaff. The same. Oh *Pierre!* Thou art come in season,
I was just going to Pray.
Pierr. Ah that's Mechanick,
Priests make a Trade on't, and yet starve by it too:
No Praying, it spoils Business, and time's precious;
Where's *Belvidera?*
Jaff. For a Day or two
I've lodg'd her privately, 'till I see farther
What Fortune will do with me? Prithee, Friend,
If thou would'st have me fit to hear good Council,
Speak not of *Belvidera*—
Pierr. Speak not of her.
Jaff. Oh no!
Pierr. Nor name her. May be I wish her well.
Jaff. Who well?
Pierr. Thy Wife, thy lovely *Belvidera*;
I hope a man may wish his Friend's Wife well,
And no harm done!
Jaff. Y' are merry *Pierre!*
Pierr. I am so:
Thou shalt smile too, and *Belvidera* smile;

We'll all rejoyce, here's something to buy Pins,
Marriage is Chargeable.
Jaff. I but half wisht.
To see the Devil, and he's here already.
Well!
What must this buy, Rebellion, Murder, Treason?
Tell me which way I must be damn'd for this.
Pierr. When last we parted, we had no qualms like these,
But entertain'd each others thoughts like Men,
Whose Souls were well acquainted. Is the World
Reform'd since our last meeting? What new miracles
Have happen'd? Has *Priuli's* heart relented?
Can he be honest?
Jaff. Kind Heav'n! let heavy Curses
Gall his old Age; Cramps, Aches, rack his Bones;
And bitterest disquiet wring his Heart;
Oh let him live 'till Life become his burden!
Let him grown under't long, linger an Age
In the worst Agonies and Pangs of Death,
And find its ease, but late.
Pierr. Nay, could'st thou not
As well, my Friend, have stretcht the Curse to all
The Senate round, as to one single Villain?
Jaff. But Curses stick not: Could I kill with Cursing,
By Heav'n I know not thirty Heads in *Venice*
Should not be blasted; Senators should rot
Like Dogs on Dung-hills; but their Wives and Daughters
Dye of their own diseases. Oh for a Curse
To kill with!
Pierr. Daggers, Daggers, are much better!
Jaff. Ha!
Pierr. Daggers.
Jaff. But where are they?
Pierr. Oh, a Thousand
May be dispos'd in honest hands in *Venice.*
Jaff. Thou talk'st in Clouds.
Pierr. But yet a Heart half wrong'd
As thine has bin, would find the meaning, *Jaffeir.*
Jaff. A thousand Daggers, all in honest hands;
And have not I a Friend will stick one here?
Pierr. Yes, if I thought thou wert not to be cherisht
To a nobler purpose, I'de be that Friend.
But thou hast better Friends, Friends, whom thy Wrongs
Have made thy Friends; Friends worthy to be called so;
I'le trust thee with a secret: There are Spirits
This hour at work. But as thou art a Man,
Whom I have pickt and chosen from the World,

Swear, that thou wilt be true to what I utter,
And when I have told thee, that which only Gods
And Men like Gods are privy to, then swear,
No Chance or Change shall wrest it from thy Bosom.
Jaff. When thou would'st bind me, is there need of Oaths ?
(Green-sickness Girls lose Maiden-heads with such Counters)
Fou thou art so near my heart, that thou may'st see
Its bottom, found its strength, and firmness to thee :
Is Coward, Fool, or Villian, in my face ?
If I seem none of these, I dare believe
Thou would'st not use me in a little Cause,
For I am fit for Honour's toughest task ;
Nor ever yet found fooling was my Province ;
And for a villainous inglorious enterprize,
I know thy heart so well, I dare lay mine
Before thee, set it to what Point thou wilt.
Pierr. Nay, It's Cause thou wilt be fond of *Jaffeir.*
For it is founded on the noblest Basis,
Our Liberties, our natural Inheritance ;
There's no Religion, no Hypocrisie in't ;
Wee'l do the Business, and ne're fast and pray for't :
Openly act a deed, the World shall gaze
With wonder at, and envy when it is done.
Jaff. For Liberty !
Peirr. For Liberty my Friend !
Thou shalt be freed from base *Priuli*'s Tyranny,
And thy sequestred Fortunes heal'd again.
I shall be freed from opprobrious Wrongs,
That press me now, and bend my Spirit downward :
All *Venice* free, and every growing Merit
Succeed to its just Right : Fools shall be pull'd
From Wisdom's Seat ; those baleful unclean Birds,
Those Lazy-Owls, who (perch'd near Fortunes Top)
Sit only watchful with their heavy Wings
To cuff down new fledg'd Virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the Grove harmonious.
Jaff. What can I do ?
Pierr. Can'st thou not kill a Senator ?
Jaff. Were there one wise or honest, I could kill him
For herding with that nest of Fools and Knaves ;
By all my Wrongs, thou talk'st as if revenge
Were to be had, and the brave Story warms me.
Pierr. Swear then !
Jaff. I do, by all those glittering Stars
And yond great Ruling Planet of the Night !
By all good Pow'rs above, and ill below !
By Love and Friendship, dearer than my Life !

No Pow'r or Death shall make me false to thee.
Pierr. Here we embrace, and I'll unlock my Heart.
A Councel's held hard by, where the destruction
Of this great Empire's hatching: There I'll lead thee!
But be a Man, for thou art to mix with Men
Fit to disturb the Peace of all the World,
And rule it when it's wildest—
Jaff. I give thee thanks
For this kind warning: Yes, I will be a Man,
And charge thee, *Pierre*, when e're thou see'st my fears
Betray me less, to rip this Heart of mine
Out of my Breast, and shew it for a Cowards.
Come, let's begone, for from this hour I chase
All little thoughts, all tender humane Follies
Out of my bosom: Vengeance shall have room:
Revenge!
Pierr. And Liberty! [*Exeunt*
Jaff. Revenge! Revenge—

The Scene *changes to* Aquilina's *House, the Greek Curtezan.*

Enter Renault.

Renault. Why was my choice Ambition, the first ground
A Wretch can build on? it's indeed at distance
A good Prospect, tempting to the View,
The Height delights us, and the Mountain Top
Looks beautiful, because it's nigh to Heav'n,
But we ne're think how sandy's the Foundation,
What Storm will batter, and what Tempest shake us!
Who's there?

Enter Spinosa.

Spino. *Renault*, good morrow! for by this time
I think the Scale of Night has turn'd the ballance,
And weighs up Morning: Has the Clock struck Twelve?
Rena. Yes, Clocks will go as they are set. But Man,
Irregular Man's ne're constant, never certain:
I've spent at least three pretious hours of darkness
In waiting dull attendance; 'tis the Curse
Of diligent Virtue to be mixt like mine,
With giddy Tempers, Souls but half resolv'd.
Spin. Hell seize that Soul amongst us, it can frighten.
Rena. What's then the cause that I am here alone?
Why are we not together?

Enter Eliot.

O Sir, welcome!
You are an *Englishman*: When Treason's hatching

One might have thought you'd not have been behind hand.
In what Whore's lap have you been lolling?
Give but an *Englishman* his Whore and ease,
Beef and a Sea-coal fire, he's yours for ever.
Eliot. *Frenchman*, you are sawcy.
Rena. How!

Enter Bedamore *the Embassador*, Theodore, Brainveil, Durand, Brabe, Revellido, Mezzana, Ternon, Retrosi, *Conspirators.*

Bedam. At difference, fy.
Is this a time for quarrels? Thieves and Rogues
Fall out and brawl: Should Men of your high calling,
Men separated by the Choice of Providence,
From the gross heap of Mankind, and set here
In this great assembly as in one great Jewel,
T'adorn the bravest purpose it e're smil'd on;
Should you like Boys wrangle for trifles?
Ren. Boys!
Beda. *Renault*, thy Hand!
Ren. I thought I'd given my Heart
Long since to every Man that mingles here;
But grieve to find it trusted with such Tempers,
That can't forgive my froward Age its weakness.
Beda. *Eliot*, thou once had'st Vertue, I have seen
Thy stubborn Temper bend with godlike Goodness,
Not half thus courted: 'Tis thy Nation's Glory,
To hugg the Foe that offers brave Alliance.
Once more embrace, my Friends—wee'l all embrace—
United thus, we are the mighty Engin
Must twist this rooted Empire from its Basis!
Totters it not already?
Eliot. Would it were tumbling.
Bed. Nay it shall down: This Night we Seal its ruine.

Enter Pierre.

Oh *Pierre*! thou art welcome!
Come to my breast, for by its hopes thou look'st
Lovelily dreadful, and the Fate of *Venice*
Seems on thy Sword already. Oh my *Mars!*
The Poets that first feign'd a God of War
Sure prophecy'd of thee.
Pierr. Friends! was not *Brutus*,
(I mean that *Brutus*, who in open Senate
Stabb'd the first *Cæsar* that usurp'd the World)
A Gallant Man?
Rena. Yes, and *Cateline* too;

Tho' story wrong his Fame: for he conspir'd
To prop the reeling Glory of his Country:
His Cause was good.
Beda. And ours as much above it,
As *Renault* thou art Superior to *Cethegus*,
Or *Pierre* to Cassius.
Pierr. Then to what we aim at
When do we start? or must we talk for ever?
Beda. No *Pierre*, the Deed's near Birth: Fate seems to have set
The Business up, and given it to our care,
I hope there's not a heart nor hand amongst us
But is firm and ready.
All. All!
Wee'l die with *Bedamore.*
Beda. Oh Men,
Matchless, as will your Glory be hereafter.
The Game is for a Matchless Prize, if won;
If lost, disgraceful Ruine.
Ren. What can lose it?
The publick Stock's a Beggar; one *Venetian*
Trusts not another: Look into their Stores
Of general safety; Empty Magazines,
A tatter'd Fleet, a murmuring unpaid Army,
Bankrupt Nobility, a harrast Commonalty,
A Factious, giddy, and divided Senate,
Is all the strength of *Venice*: Let's destroy it;
Let's fill their Magazines with Arms to awe them,
Man out their Fleet, and make their Trade maintain it;
Let loose the murmuring Army on their Masters,
To pay themselves with plunder; Lop their Nobles
To the base Roots, whence most of 'em first sprung;
Enslave the Rowt, whom smarting will make humble,
Turn out their droning Senate, and possess
That Seat of Empire which our Souls were fram'd for.
Pierr. Ten thousand men are Armed at your Nod,
Commanded all by Leaders fit to guide
A Battle for the freedom of the World;
This wretched State has starv'd them in its service,
And by your bounty quicken'd, they 're resolv'd
To serve your Glory, and revenge their own!
Th' have all their different Quarters in this City,
Watch for th' Alarm, and grumble 'tis so tardy.
Beda. I doubt not Friend, but thy unweary'd diligence
Has still kept waking, and it shall have ease;
After this night it is resolv'd we meet
Nomore, 'till *Venice* own us for her Lords.
Pierr. How lovely the *Adriatique* Whore, Drest

Drest in her Flames, will shine! devouring Flames!
Such as shall burn her to the watery bottom
And hiss in her Foundation.
Beda. Now if any
Amongst us that owns this glorious Cause,
Have Friends or Interest, hee'd wish to save,
Let it be told, the general Doom is Seal'd;
But I'de forgo the Hopes of a Worlds Empire,
Rather than wound the Bowels of my Friend.
Pierr. I must confess you there have toucht my weakness,
I have a Friend; hear it, such a Friend!
My heart was ner'e shut to him: Nay, I'l tell you,
He knows the very Business of this Hour;
But he rejoyces in the Cause, and loves it,
W' have chang'd a Vow to live and die together,
And He's at hand to ratify it here,
Ren. How! all betray'd?
Pierr. No—I've dealt nobly with you;
I've brought my All into the publick Stock;
I had but one Friend, and him I'l share amongst you!
Receive and Cherish him: Or if, when seen
And searcht, you find him worthless, as my Tongue
Has lodg'd this Secret in his faithful Breast,
To ease your fears I wear a Dagger here
Shall rip it out again, and give you rest.
Come forth, thou only Good I e're could boast of.

Enter Jaffeir *with a Dagger.*

Beda. His Presence bears the show of Manly Vertue.
Jaff. I know you'l wonder all, that thus uncall'd,
I dare approach this place of fatal Councels;
But I am amongst you, and by Heav'n it glads me,
To see so many Vertues thus united,
To restore Justice and dethrown Oppression.
Command this Sword, if you would have it quiet,
Into this Breast; but if you think it worthy
To cut the Throats of reverend Rogues in Robes,
Send me into the curs'd assembl'd Senate;
It shrinks not, tho I meet a Father there;
Would you behold this City Flaming? Here's
A hand shall bear a lighted Torch at noon
To the Arsenal, and set its Gates on fire.
Ren. You talk this well, Sir.
Jaff. Nay — by Heav'n I'l do this.
Come, come, I read distrust in all your faces,
You fear me a Villain, and indeed it's odd
To hear a stranger talk thus at first meeting,

Of matters, that have been so well debated;
But I come ripe with Wrongs as you with Councels;
I hate this Senate, am a Foe to *Venice*;
A Friend to none, but Men resolv'd like me,
To push on Mischief: Oh did you but know me,
I need not talk thus!
Beda. *Pierre*! I must embrace him,
My heart beats to this Man as if it knew him.
Rena. I never lov'd these huggers.
Jaff. Still I see
The cause delights me not. Your Friends survey me,
As I were dang'rous—but I come Arm'd
Against all doubts, and to your trust will give
A Pledge, worth more than all the World can pay for.
My *Belvidera*! Ho! my *Belvidera*!
Bed. What wonder next?
Jaff. Let me entreat you,
As I have henceforth hopes to call ye friends,
That all but the Ambassador, this
Grave Guide of Councels, with my friend that owns me,
Withdraw a while to spare a Womans blushes.
[*Ex. all but* Bed. Rena. Jaff. Pierr.
Beda. *Pierre*, whither will this Ceremony lead us?
Jaff. My *Belvidera*! *Belvidera*!
Belv. Who? [*Enter* Belvidera.
Who calls so lowd at this late peacefull hour?
That Voice was wont to come in gentler whispers,
And fill my Ears with the soft breath of Love:
Thou hourly Image of my Thoughts, where art thou?
Jaff. Indeed 'tis late.
Bed. Oh! I have slept and dreamt,
And dreamt again: Where hast thou been thou Loyterer?
Tho my Eyes clos'd, my Arms have still been open'd;
Stretcht every way betwixt my broken slumbers,
To search if thou wert come to crown my Rest;
There's no repose without thee: Oh the day,
Too soon will break, and wake us to our sorrow;
Come, come to bed, and bid thy Cares good Night.
Jaff. Oh *Belvidera*! we must change the Scene
In which the past Delights of Life were tasted:
The poor sleep little, we must learn to watch
Our labours late, and early every Morning,
Mid'st winter Frosts, then clad and fed with sparing,
Rise to our toils, and drudge away the day.
Belv. Alas! where am I! whither is't you lead me!
Methinks I read distraction in your face!
Something less gentle than the Fate you tell me: You

You shake and tremble too! your blood runs cold!
Heaven's guard my Love, and bless his heart with Patience.
Jaff. That I have Patience, let our Fate bear witness,
Who has ordain'd it so, that thou and I
(Thou the divinest Good man e're possest,
And I the wretched'st of the Race of Man)
This very hour, without one tear, must part.
Belv. Part! must we part? Oh! am I then forsaken?
Will my Love cast me off? have my misfortunes
Offended him so highly, that hee'l leave me?
Why dragg you from me; whither are you going?
My Dear! my Life! my Love!
Jaff. Oh Friends!
Belv. Speak to me.
Jaff. Take her from my heart,
Shee'l gain such hold else, I shall ner'e get loose.
I charge thee take her, but with tender'st care
Relieve her Troubles and asswage her sorrows.
Ren. Rise, Madam! and Command amongst your Servants!
Jaff. To you, Sirs, and your Honours, I bequeath her,
And with her this, when I prove unworthy— [*Gives a dagger.*
You know the rest:—Then strike it to her heart;
And tell her, he, who three whole happy years
Lay in her Arms, and each kind Night repeated
The passionate Vows of still encreasing Love,
Sent that Reward for all her Truth and Sufferings.
Belv. Nay, take my Life, since he has sold it cheaply;
Or send me to some distant Clime your slave,
But let it be far off, least my complainings
Should reach his guilty Ears, and shake his peace.
Jaff. No *Belvidera*, I've contriv'd thy honour,
Trust to my Faith, and be but Fortune kind
To me, as I'l preserve that faith unbroken,
When next we meet, I'l lift thee to a height,
Shall gather all the gazing VVorld about thee,
To wonder what strange Virtue plac'd thee there.
But if we ner'e meet more——
Belv. Oh thou unkind one,
Never meet more? have I deserv'd this from you?
Look on me, tell me, tell me, speak thou dear deceiver,
VVhy am I separated from thy Love?
If I am false, accuse me; but if true,
Don't, prithee don't in poverty forsake me.
But pitty the sad heart, that's torn with parting.
Yet hear me! yet recal me – [*Ex.* Ren. Bed. *and* Belv.
Jaff. Oh my Eyes!
Look not that way, but turn your selves awhile Into

Into my heart, and be wean'd all together.
My Friend, where art thou?
Pierr. Here, my Honour's Brother.
Jaff. Is *Belvidera* gone?
Pierr. *Renault* has lead her
Back to her own Apartment: but, by Heav'n!
Thou must not see her more till our work's over.
Jaff. No:
Pierr. Not for your life.
Jaff. Oh *Pierre*, wert thou but she,
How I could pull thee down into my heart,
Gaze on thee till my Eye-strings crackt with Love,
Till all my sinews with its fire extended,
Fixt me upon the Rack of ardent longing;
Then swelling, sighing, raging to be blest,
Come like a panting Turtle to thy Breast,
On thy soft Bosom, hovering, bill and play,
Confess the cause why last I fled away;
Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o're,
And never follow false Ambition more. [*Ex.* Ambo.

Act III.

Enter Aquilina *and her* Maid.

Aquil. TELL him I am gone to bed: Tell him I am not at home; tell him I've better Company with me, or any thing; tell him in short I will not see him, the eternal troublesome vexatious Fool: He's worse Company than an ignorant Physitian—— I'l not be disturb'd at these unseasonable hours.

Maid. But Madam! He's here already, just enter'd the doors.

Aquil. Turn him out agen, you unnecessary, useless, giddy-brain'd Asse! if he will not begone, set the house a fire and burn us both: I had rather meet a Toad in my dish than that old hideous Animal in my Chamber to Night. [*Enter* Antonio.

Anto. *Nacky, Nacky, Nacky* — how dost do *Nacky?* Hurry durry. I am come little *Nacky*; past eleven aclock, a late hour; time in all Conscience to go to bed *Nacky—Nacky* did I say? Ay *Nacky*; *Aquilina, lina, lina, quilina, quilina, quilina, Aquilina, Naquilina, Naquilina, Acky, Acky, Nacky, Nacky,* Queen *Nacky* ... come let's to bed — you Fubbs, you Pugg you—you little Puss—Purree Tuzzey—I am a Senator.

Aquil. You are Fool, I am sure. *Anto.*

Anto. May be so too sweet-heart. Never the worse Senator for all that. Come *Nacky, Nacky*, let's have a Game at Rump, *Nacky*.

Aquil. You would do well Signior to be troublesome here no longer, but leave me to my self, be sober and go home, Sir.

Anto. Home *Madona*!

Aquil. Ay, home, Sir. Who am I?

Anto. Madona, as I take it you are my — you are — thou art my little *Nicky Nacky*...that's all!

Aquil. I find you are resolv'd to be troublesome, and so to make short of the matter in few words, I hate you, detest you, loath you, I am weary of you, sick of you — hang you, you are an Old, silly, Impertinent, impotent, sollicitous Coxcomb, Crazy in your head, and lazy in your Body, love to be medling with every thing, and if you had not Money, you are good for nothing.

Anto. Good for nothing! Hurry durry, I'l try that presently. Sixty one years Old, and good for nothing; that's brave. [*To the Maid.*] Come come come Mistress fiddle-faddle, turn you out for a season; go turn out i say, it is our will and pleasure to be private some moments—out, out when you are bid too—[*Puts her out and locks the door.*] Good for nothing you say.

Aquil. Why what are you good for?

Anto. In the first place, Madam, I am Old, and consequently very wise, very wise, *Madona*, d'e mark that? in the second place take notice, if you please, that I am a Senator, and when I think fit can make Speeehes *Madona*. Hurry durry, I can make a Speech in the Senate-house now and then—wou'd make your hair stand an end, *Madona*.

Aquil. What care I for your Speeches in the Senate-house, if you would be silent here, I should thank you.

Anto. Why, I can make Speeches to thee too, my lovely *Madona*; for Example—my cruel fair one.

[*Takes out a Purse of Gold, and at every pawse shakes it.* Since it is my Fate, that you should with your Servant angry prove; tho late at Night—I hope 'tis not too late with this to gain reception for my Love—there's for thee my little *Nicky Nacky*—take it, here take it—I say take it, or I'l throw it at your head—how now, rebel!

Aquil. Truly, my Illustrious Senator, I must confess your Honour is at present most profoundly eloquent indeed.

Anto. Very well: Come, now let's sit down and think upon't a little —come sit I say—sit down by me a little my *Nicky Nacky*, hah— [*Sits down*] Hurry durry—good for nothing—

Aquil. No Sir, if you please I can know my distance and stand.

Anto. Stand: How? *Nacky*, up and I down! Nay then let me exclaim with the Poet.

Shew me a Case more pitiful who can,
A standing Woman, and a falling Man.

Hurry durry—not sit down—*see this ye Gods*—
You won't sit down? *Aquil.* No Sir. *Anto.*

Anto. Then look you now, suppose me a Bull, a *Basan*-Bull, the Bull of Bulls, or any Bull. Thus up I get and with my brows thus bent—I broo, I say I broo, I broo, I broo. You won't sit down will you?—I broo—

[*Bellows like a Bull, and drives her about.*

Aquil. Well, Sir, I must endure this. Now your [*She sits down.*] honour has been a Bull, pray what Beast will your Worship please to be next?

Anto. Now I'l be a Senator agen, and thy Lover little *Nicky Nacky*! [*He sits by her.*] Ah toad, toad, toad, toad! spit in my Face a little, *Nacky*—spit in my Face prithee, spit in my Face, never so little: spit but a little bit—spit, spit, spit, spit, when you are bid I say; do prithee spit—now, now, now, spit: what, you won't spit, will you? Then I'l be a Dog.

Aquil. A Dog my Lord?

Anto. Ay a Dog—and I'l give thee this t'other purse to let me be a Dog—and to use me like a Dog a little. Hurry durry—I will—here 'tis.— [*Gives the Purse.*

Aquil. Well, with all my heart. But let me beseech your Dogship to play your trick's over as fast as you can, that you may come to stinking the sooner, and be turn'd out of dores as you deserve.

Anto. Ay, ay—no matter for that—that [*He gets under the Table*] shan't move me——Now, bough waugh waugh, bough waugh. . .

[*Barks like a dog.*

Aquil. Hold, hold, hold Sir, I beseech you: what is't you do? If Curs bite, they must be kickt, Sir. Do you see, kickt thus.

Anto. Ay with all my heart: do kick, kick on, now I am under the Table, kick agen—kick harder—harder yet, bough waugh waugh, waugh, bough—'odd, I'le have a snap at thy shins—bough waugh wough, waugh, bough—'odd she kicks bravely.—

Aquil. Nay, then I'l go another way to work with you: and I think here's an Instrument fit for the purpose. [*Fetches a Whip and Bell.* What bite your Mistress, sirrah! out, out of dores, you Dog, to kennel and behang'd—bite your Mistress by the Legs, you rogue.—

[*She Whips him.*

Anto. Nay, prithee *Nacky*, now thou art too loving: Hurry durry, 'odd I'l be a Dog no longer.

Aquil. Nay none of your fawning and grinning: But be gone, or here's the Discipline: What bite your Mistress by the Legs you mungril? out of dores—hout hout, to kennel sirra! go.

Anto. This is very barbarous usage *Nacky*, very barbarous: look you, I will not go—I will not stir from the dore, that I resolve—hurry durry, what shut me out? [*She Whips him out.*

Aquil. Ay, and if you come here any more to night I'l have my Footmen lug you, you Curr: What bite your poor Mistress *Nacky*, sirrah!

Enter Maid.

Maid. Heav'ns Madam! Whats the matter?

[*He howls at the door like a Dog.*

Aquil.

Aquil. Call my Foot-men hither presently.

Enter two Foot-men.

Maid. They are here already Madam, the House is all alarm'd with a strange noise, that no body knows what to make of.

Aquil. Go all of you and turn that troublesome Beast in the next room out of my house—If I ever see him within these walls again, without my leave for his Admittance, you sneaking Rogues—I'l have you poison'd all, poison'd, like Rats; every Corner of the house shall stink of one of you; Go, and learn hereafter to know my pleasure. So now for my *Pierre*:

Thus when Godlike Lover was displeased;*
We sacrifice our Fool and he's appeas'd.

[Exeunt.

SCENE *The Second.*

Enter Belvidera.

Belvid. I'M Sacrific'd! I am sold! betray'd to shame!
Inevitable Ruin has inclos'd me!
No sooner was I to my bed repair'd,
To weigh, and (weeping) ponder my condition,
But the old hoary Wretch, to whose false Care
My Peace and Honour was intrusted, came
(Like *Tarquin*) gastely with infernal Lust.
Oh thou *Roman Lucrece*! thou could'st find friends to vindicate [thy Wrong,
I never had but one, and he's prov'd false;
He that should guard my Virtue, has betray'd it;
Left me! undone me! Oh that I could hate him!
Where shall I go! Oh whither whither wander?

Enter Jaffeir.

Jaff. Can *Belvidera* want a resting place
When these poor Arms are open to receive her?
Oh 'tis in vain to struggle with Desires
Strong as my Love to thee; for every moment
I am from thy sight, the Heart within my Bosom
Moans like a tender Infant in its Cradle
Whose Nurse had left it: Come, and with the Songs
Of gentle Love perswade it to its peace.

Belvid. I fear the stubborn Wanderer will not own me,

* 4to 1704 reads "when the"

'Tis

'Tis grown a Rebel to be rul'd no longer,
Scorns the Indulgent Bosom that first lull'd it,
And like a Disobedient Child disdains
The soft Authority of *Belvidera.*
Jaff. There was a time—
Belv. Yes, yes, there was a time
When *Belvidera*'s tears, her cries, and sorrows,
Were not despis'd; when if she chanc'd to sigh,
Or look but sad;—there was indeed a time
When *Jaffeir* would have ta'ne her in his Arms,
Eas'd her declining Head upon his Breast,
And never left her 'till he found the Cause.
But let her now weep Seas,
Cry, 'till she rend the Earth; sigh 'till she burst
Her heart asunder; still he bears it all;
Deaf as the Wind, and as the Rocks unshaken.
Jaff. Have I been deaf? am I that Rock unmov'd?
Against whose root, Tears beat and sighes are sent!
In vain have I beheld thy Sorrows calmly!
Witness against me Heav'ns, have I done this?
Then bear me in a Whirlwind back agen,
And let that angry dear one ne're forgive me!
Oh thou too rashly censur'st of my Love!
Could'st thou but think how I have spent this night,
Dark and alone, no pillow to my Head,
Rest in my Eyes, nor quiet in my Heart,
Thou would'st not *Belvidera*, sure thou would'st not
Talk to me thus, but like a pitying Angel
Spreading thy wings come settle on my breast,
And hatch warm comfort there e're sorrows freeze it.
Belv. Why, then poor Mourner, in what baleful Corner
Hast thou been talking with that Witch the Night?
On what cold stone hast thou been stretcht along,
Gathering the grumbling Winds about thy Head,
To mix with theirs the Accents of thy Woes!
Oh now I find the Cause my Love forsakes me!
I am no longer fit to bear a share
In his Concernments: My weak female Virtue
Must not be trusted; 'Tis too frail and tender.
Jaff. Oh *Porcia! Porcia!* What a Soul was thine?
Belv. That *Porcia* was a Woman, and when *Brutus*
Big with the fate of *Rome*, (Heav'n guard thy safety!)
Conceal'd from her the Labours of his Mind,
She let him see, her Blood was great as his,
Flow'd from a Spring as noble, and a Heart
Fit to partake his troubles, as his Love:
Fetch, fetch that Dagger back, the dreadful dower

Thou gav'st last night in parting with me; strike it
Here to my heart; and as the Blood flows from it,
Judge if it run not pure as *Cato*'s Daughter's.
Jaff. Thou art to good, and I indeed unworthy,
Unworthy so much Virtue: Teach me how
I may deserve such matchless Love as thine,
And see with what attention I'l obey thee.
Belv. Do not despise me: that's the All I ask.
Jaff. Despise thee! Hear me—
Belv. Oh thy charming Tongue
Is but too well acquainted with my weakness,
Knows, let it name but Love, my melting heart
Dissolves within my Breast; 'till with clos'd Eyes
I reel into thy Arms, and all's forgotten.
Jaff. What shall I do?
Belv. Tell me! be just, and tell me
Why dwells that busy Cloud upon thy face?
Why am I made a stranger? why that sigh,
And I not know the Cause? Why when the World
Is wrapt in Rest, why chooses then my Love
To wander up and down in horrid darkness,
Loathing his bed, and these desiring Arms?
Why are these Eyes Blood shot, with tedious watching?
Why starts he now? and looks as if he wisht
His Fate were finisht? 'Tell me, ease my fears;
Least when we next time meet, I want the power
To search into the sickness of thy Mind,
But talk as wildly then as thou look'st now.
Jaff. Oh *Belvidera*!
Belv. Why was I last night deliver'd to a Villain?
Jaff. Hah, a Villain!
Belv. Yes! to a Villain! Why at such an hour
Meets that assembly all made up of Wretches
That look as Hell had drawn 'em into League?
Why, I in this hand, and in that a Dagger,
Was I deliver'd with such dreadful Ceremonies?
" *To you, Sirs, and to your Honour I bequeath her,*
" *And with her this: When e're I prove unworthy,*
" *You know the rest, then strike it to her Heart?*"
Oh! why's that *rest* conceal'd from me? must I
Be made the hostage of a hellish Trust?
For such I know I am; that's all my value?
But by the Love and Loyalty I owe thee,
I'l free thee from the Bondage of these Slaves,
Strait to the Senate, tell 'em all I know,
All that I think, all that my fears inform me!
Jaff. Is this the *Roman* Virtue! this the Blood

That

That boast its purity with *Cato's* Daughter!
Would she have er'e betray'd her *Brutus*?
Belv. No:
For *Brutus* trusted her: Wer't thou so kind,
What would not *Belvidera* suffer for thee?
Jaff. I shall undo my self, and tell thee all.
Belv. Look not upon me, as I am a Woman,
But as a Bone, thy Wife, thy Friend; who long
Has had admission to thy heart, and there
Study'd the Virtues of thy gallant Nature;
Thy Constancy, thy Courage and thy Truth,
Have been my daily lesson: I have learnt them,
Am bold as thou, can suffer or despise
The worst of Fates for thee; and with thee share them.
Jaff. Oh you divinest Powers! look down and hear
My Prayers! instruct me to reward this Virtue!
Yet think a little, e're thou tempt me further:
Think I have a Tale to tell, will shake thy Nature,
Melt all this boasted Constancy thou talk'st of
Into vile tears and despicable sorrows:
Then if thou should'st betray me!
Belv. Shall I swear?
Jaff. No: do not swear: I would not violate
Thy tender Nature with so rude a Bond:
But as thou hop'st to see me live my days,
And love thee long, lock this within thy Breast;
I've bound my self by all the strictest Sacraments,
Divine and humane—
Belv. Speak!
Jaff. To kill thy Father—
Belv. My Father!
Jaff. Nay the Throats of the whole Senate
Shall bleed my *Belvidera*: He amongst us
That spares his Father, Brother, or his Friend,
Is Damn'd: How rich and beauteous will the face
Of Ruin look, when these wide streets run blood;
I and the glorious Partner's of my Fortune
Shouting, and striding o're the prostrate Dead;
Still to new waste; whilst thou, far off in safety
Smiling, shalt see the wonders of our daring;
And when night comes, with Praise and Love receive me.
Belv. Oh!
Jaff. Have a care, and shrink not even in thought!
For if thou do'st—
Belv. I know it, thou wilt kill me.
Do, strike thy Sword into this bosom: Lay me
Dead on the Earth, and then thou wilt be safe: Murder

Murder my Father! tho his Cruel Nature
Has persecuted me to my undoing.
Driven me to basest wants; can I behold him
With smiles of Vengeance, butcher'd in his Age?
The sacred Fountain of my life destroy'd?
And canst thou shed the blood that gave me being?
Nay, be a Traitor too, and sell thy Country;
Can thy great Heart descend so vilely low,
Mix with hired Slaves, Bravoes, and Common stabbers,
Nose-slitters, Ally-lurking Villians! joyn
With such a Crew, and take a Ruffian's Wages,
To cut the Throats of Wretches as they sleep?
Jaff. Thou wrong'st me, *Belvidera*! I've engag'd
With Men of Souls: fit to reform the ills
Of all Mankind: There's not a Heart amongst them,
But's as stout as Death, yet honest as the Nature
Of Man first made, e're Fraud and Vice were fashions.
Belv. What's he, to whose curst hands last night thou [gav'st me?
Was that well done? Oh! I could tell a story
Would rowse thy Lyon Heart out of its Den
And make it rage with terrifying fury.
Jaff. Speak on I charge thee!
Belv. Oh my Love! if e're
Thy *Belvidera*'s Peace deservd thy Care,
Remove me from this place: Last night, last night!
Jaff. Distract me not, but give me all the Truth.
Belv. No sooner wer't thou gone, and I alone,
Left in the pow'r of that old Son of Mischief;
No sooner was I lain on my sad Bed,
But that vile Wretch approacht me; loose, unbutton'd,
Ready for violation: Then my Heart
Throbb'd with its fears: O how I wept and sigh'd,
And shrunk and trembled; wish'd in vain for him
That should protect me. Thou alas! wert gone!
Jaff. Patience! sweet Heav'n, 'till I make vengeance sure.
Belv. He drew the hideous Dagger forth thou gav'st him,
And with upbraiding smiles he said, *behold it;*
This is the pledge of a false Husbands love:
And in my Arms then prest, and wou'd have clasp'd me;
But with my Cries I scar'd his Coward heart,
'Till he withdrew, and mutter'd vows to Hell.
These are thy Friends! with these thy Life, thy Honour,
Thy Love, all's stak't, and all will go to ruine.
Jaff. No more: I charge thee keep this secret close;
Clear up thy sorrows, look as if thy wrongs
Were all forgot, and treat him like a Friend,
As no complaint were made. No more, retire,

Retire my Life, and doubt not of my Honour ;
I'l heal its failings, and deserve thy Love.
Belv. Oh should I part with thee, I fear thou wilt
In Anger leave me, and return no more :
Jaff. Return no more ! I would not live without thee
Another Night to purchase the Creation.
Belv. When shall we meet again ?
Jaff. Anon at Twelve !
I'l steal my self to thy expecting Arms,
Come like a Travell'd Dove and bring thee Peace.
Belv. Indeed !
Jaff. By all our loves !
Belv. 'Tis hard to part :
But sure no falshood e're lookt so fairly.
Farewell—Remember Twelve. [*Ex.* Belvid.
Jaff. Let Heav'n forget me
When I remember not thy Truth, thy Love.
How curst is my Condition, toss'd and justl'd,
From every Corner ; Fortune's Common Fool,
The jest of Rogues, an Instrumental Ass
For Villains to lay loads of Shame upon,
And drive about just for their ease and scorn.

Enter Pierre.

Pierr. Jaffeir ! *Jaff.* Who calls !
Pierr. A Friend, that could have wisht
T' have found thee otherwise imploy'd : what, hunt
A Wife on the dull soil ! sure a stanch Husband
Of all Hounds is the dullest ? wilt thou never,
Never be wean'd from Caudles and Confections ?
What feminine Tale hast thou been listening to,
Of unayr'd shirts ; Catharrs and Tooth Ach got
By thin-sol'd shoos ? Damnation ! that a Fellow
Chosen to be a Sharer in the Destruction
Of a whole People, should sneak thus in Corners
To ease his fulsom Lusts, and Fool his Mind.
Jaff. May not a Man then trifle out an hour
With a kind Woman and not wrong his calling ?
Pierr. Not in a Cause like ours.
Jaff. Then Friend our Cause
Is in a damn'd condition : for I'l tell thee,
That Canker-worm call'd *Letchery* has toucht it,
'Tis tainted vilely : would'st thou think it, *Renault*,
(That mortify'd old wither'd Winter Rogue)
Loves simple Fornication like a Priest,
I found him out for watering at my Wife :

He visited her last night like a kind Guardian:
Faith she has some Temptations, that's the truth on't.
Pierr. He durst not wrong his Trust!
Jaff. 'Twas something late tho
To take the freedome of a Ladies Chamber.
Pierr. Was she in bed?
Jaff. Yes faith in Virgin sheets
White as her bosom, *Pierre*, disht neatly up,
Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste.
Oh how the old Fox stunk I warrant thee
When the rank fit was on him.
Pierr. Patience guide me!
He' us'd no violence?
Jaff. No, no! out on't, violence!
Play'd with her neck; brusht her with his Gray-beard,
Struggl'd and towz'd, tickl'd her 'till she squeak'd a little
May be, or so—but not a jot of violence—
Pierr. Damn him.
Jaff. Ay, so say I: but hush, no more on't;
All hitherto is well, and I believe
My self no Monster yet: Tho no Man knows
What Fate he's born to? sure 'tis near the hour
We all should meet for our concluding Orders:
Will the Ambassador be here in person?
Pierr. No: he has sent Commission to that Villain, *Renault*;
To give the Executing Charge;
I'd have thee be a Man if possible
And keep thy temper; for a brave Revenge
Ne're comes too late.
Jaff. Fear not, I am cool as Patience:
Had he compleated my dishonour, rather
Than hazard the Success our hopes are ripe for,
I'd bear it all with mortifying Vertue.
Pierr. He's yonder coming this way through the Hall;
His thoughts seem full.
Jaff. Prithee retire, and leave me
With him alone: I'l put him to some tryal,
See how his rotten part will bear the touching.
Pierr. Be careful then. [*Ex* Pierre.
Jaff. Nay never doubt, but trust me.
What, be a Devil! take a Damning Oath
For shedding native blood! can there be a sin
In merciful repentance? Oh this Villain.

Enter Renault.

Renault. Perverse! and peevish! what a slave is Man!
To let his itching flesh thus get the better of him! Dispatch

Dispatch the Tool her Husband—that we're well.
Who's there? *Jaff.* A Man.
Ren. My Friend, my near Ally!
The hostage of your faith, my beauteous Charge, is very well.
Jaff. Sir, are you sure of that?
Stands she in perfect health? beats her pulse even?
Neither too hot nor cold?
Ren. What means that question?
Jaff. Oh Women have fantastick Constitutions,
Inconstant as their Wishes, always wavering,
And ne're fixt; was it not boldly done
Even at first sight to trust the Thing I lov'd
(A tempting Treasure too!) with Youth so fierce
And vigorous as thine? but thou art honest.
Ren. Who dares accuse me?
Jaff. Curst be him that doubts
Thy virtue: I have try'd it, and declare,
Where I to choose a Guardian of my Honour
I'd put it into thy keeping; for I know thee.
Ren. Know me!
Jaff. Ay know thee: There's no falsehood in thee.
Thou look'st just as thou art: Let us embrace.
Now would'st thou cut my Throat or I cut thine?
Ren. You dare not do't.
Jaff. You lye Sir.
Ren. How!
Jaff. No more.
'Tis a base World, and must reform, that's all.

Enter Spinosa, Theodore, Eliot, Revellido, Durand, Brainveil, *and the rest of the Conspirators.*

Ren. *Spinosa*, *Theodore*!
Spin. The same:
Ren. You are welcome!
Spin. You are trembling, Sir.
Ren. 'Tis a cold Night indeed, I am Aged,
Full of decay and natural infirmities; [Pierre *re-enters.*
We shall be warm, my Friend, I hope to morrow.
Pierr. 'Twas not well done, thou shou'd'st have stroakt him
And not have gall'd him.
Jaff. Damn him, let him chew on't.
Heav'n! where am I! beset with cursed Fiends,
That wait to Damn me: What a Devil's man,
When he forgets his nature—hush my heart.
Ren. My Friends, 'tis late: are we assembled all?
Where's *Theodore*? *Theo.*

Theo. At hand.
Ren. Spinosa.
Spino. Here.
Ren. Brainveil.
Brain. I am ready.
Ren. Durand and Brabe.
Dur. Command us
We are both prepar'd!
Ren. Mezzana, Revellido,
Ternon Retrosi; Oh you are Men I find
Fit to behold your Fate, and meet her Summons,
To morrow's rising Sun must see you all
Deckt in your honours! are the Souldiers ready?
Omn. All, all.
Ren. You, *Durand,* with your thousand must possess
St. Marks: You, Captain, know your charge already;
'Tis to secure the Ducal Palace: you
Brabe with a hundred more must gain the *Secque.*
With the like number *Brainveil* to the *Procuralle.*
Be all this done with the least tumult possible,
'Till in each place you post sufficient guards:
Then sheath your Swords in every breast you meet.
Jaff. Oh reverend Cruelty: Damn'd bloody Villain!
Ren. During this Execution *Durand,* you
Must in the mid'st keep your Battalia fast,
And *Theodore* be sure to plant the Canon
That may Command the streets; whilst *Revellido,*
Mezzana, Ternon, and *Retrosi,* Guard you.
(This done!) wee'l give the General Alarm,
Apply Petards, and force the Ars'nal Gates;
Then fire the City round in several places,
Or with our Canon (if it dare resist)
Batter't to Ruin. But above all I charge you
Shed blood enough, spare neither Sex nor Age,
Name nor Condition; if there live a Senator
After to morrow, tho the dullest Rogue
That e're said nothing, we have lost our ends;
If possible, let's kill the very Name
Of Senator, and bury it in blood.
Jaff. Merciless, horrid slave!—Ay, blood enough!
Shed blood enough, old *Renault*: how thou charm'st me!
Ren. But one thing more, and then farewell till Fate
Join us again, or separate us ever:
First, let's embrace, Heav'n knows who next shall thus
Wing ye together: But let's all remember
We wear no common Cause upon our Swords,
Let each Man think that on his single Virtue

Depends the Good and Fame of all the rest ;
Eternal Honour or perpetual Infamy.
Let's remember, through what dreadful hazards
Propitious Fortune hitherto has led us,
How often on the brink of some discovery
have we stood tottering, and yet still kept our ground
So well, the busiest searchers ne'r could follow
Those subtle Tracks which puzzled all suspition :
You droop Sir.

Jaff. No : with a most profound attention
I've heard it all, and wonder at thy vertue.

Ren. Tho there be yet few hours 'twixt them and Ruin,
Are not the Senate lull'd in full security,
Quiet and satisfy'd, as Fools are always !
Never did so profound repose forerun
Calamity so great : Nay our good Fortune
Has blinded the most piercing of Mankind ;
Strengthen'd the fearfull'st, charm'd the most suspectful,
Confounded the most subtle ; for we live,
We live my Friends, and quickly shall our Life
Prove fatal to these Tyrants : Let's consider
That we destroy Oppression, Avarice,
A People nurst up equally with Vices
And loathsome Lusts, which Nature most abhors,
And such as without shame she cannot suffer.

Jaff. Oh *Belvidera*, take me to thy Arms
And shew me where's my Peace, for I've lost it. [*Ex.* Jaff.

Ren. Without the least remorse then let's resolve
With Fire and Sword t'exterminate these Tyrants,
And when we shall behold those curst Tribunals,
Stain'd by the Tears and sufferings of the Innocent,
Burning with flames rather from Heav'n than ours,
The raging furious and unpitying Souldier
Pulling his reeking Dagger from the bosoms
Of gasping Wretches ; Death in every Quarter,
With all that sad disorder can produce,
To make a Spectacle of horror : Then,
Then let's call to mind, my dearest Friends,
That there's nothing pure upon the Earth,
That the most valu'd things have most allays,
And that in change of all those vile Enormities,
Under whose weight this wretched Country labours,
The Means are only in our hands to Crown them.

Pierr. And may those Powers above that are propitious
To gallant minds record this Cause, and bless it.

Ren. Thus happy, thus secure of all we wish for,
Should there my Friends be found amongst us one

False to this glorious Enterprize, what Fate,
What Vengeance were enough for such a Villian?
Eliot. Death here without repentance, Hell hereafter.
Ren. Let that be my lott, if as here I stand
Lifted by Fate amongst her darling Sons,
Tho I had one onely Brother, dear by all
The strictest ties of Nature; tho one hour
Had given us birth, one Fortune fed our wants,
One only love, and that but of each other,
Still fill'd our minds: Could I have such a Friend
Joyn'd in this Cause, and had but ground to fear
*Meant fowl play; may this right hand drop from me,
If I'd not hazard all my future peace,
And stabb him to the heart before you: who
Would not do less? Would'st not thou *Pierre* the same?
Pierr. You have singled me, Sir, out for this hard question,
As if 'twere started only for my sake!
Am I the thing you fear? Here, here's my bosom,
Search it with all your Swords! am I a Traytor?
Ren. No: but I fear your late commended Friend
Is little less: Come Sirs, 'tis now no time.
To trifle with our safety. Where's this *Jaffeir*?
Spino. He left the room just now in strange disorder.
Ren Nay, there is danger in him: I observ'd him,
During the time I took for Explanation,
He was transported from most deep attention
To a confusion which he could not smother.
His looks grew full of sadness and surprize,
All which betray'd a wavering Spirit in him,
That labour'd with reluctancy and sorrow;
What's requisite for safety must be done
With speedy Execution: he remains
Yet in our power: I for my own part wear
A Dagger.
Pierr. Well.
Ren. And I could wish it!
Pierr. Where?
Ren. Bury'd in his heart.
Pierr. Away! w'are yet all friends;
No more of this, 'twill Breed ill blood amongst us.
Spin. Let us all draw our Swords, and search the house,
Pull him from the dark hole where he sits brooding
O're his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him.
Pierr. Who talks of killing? who's he'll shed the blood
That's dear to me! is't you? or you? or you Sir?
What not one speak? how you stand gaping all
On your grave Oracle, your wooden God there; Yet

* "He" is supplied in the 4to of 1704.

Yet not a word : Then Sir I'll tell you a secret,
Suspition's but at best a Cowards Virtue ! [To *Ren.*
Ren. A Coward—— [*Handles his Sword.*
Pierr. Put, put up the Sword, old Man,
Thy hand shakes at it ; come let's heal this breach,
I am too hot ; we yet may live Friends :
Spino. 'Till we are safe, our Friendship cannot be so.
Pierr. Again : who's that ?
Spino. 'Twas I.
Theo. And I.
Revell. And I.
Eliot. And all.
Ren. Who are on my side ?
Spino. Every honest Sword,
Let's die like men and not be sold like Slaves.
Pierr. One such word more, by Heav'n I'l to the Senate
And hang ye all, like Dogs in Clusters,
Why peep your Coward Swords half out their shells ?
Why do you not all brandish them like mine ?
You fear to die, and yet dare talk of Killing ?
Ren. Go to thy Senate and betray us, hasten,
Secure thy wretched life, we fear to die
Less than thou dar'st be honest.
Pierr. That's rank falsehood,
Fear'st not thou death ? fy, there's a knavish itch
In that salt blood, an utter foe to smarting.
Had *Jaffeir's* Wife prov'd kind, he had still been true.
Foh—how that stinks ?
Thou dy ! thou kill my Friend, or thou, or thou,
Or thou, with that lean wither'd wretched Face !
Away ! disperse all to your several Charges,
And meet to morrow where your honour calls you,
I'l bring that man, whose blood you so much thirst for,
And you shall see him venture for you fairly—
Hence, hence, I say. [*Ex.* Renault *angrily.*
Spino. I fear we have been too* blame ;
And done too much.
Theo. 'Twas too farr urg'd against the man you lov'd.
Rev. Here, take our Swords and crush 'em with your feet.
Spino. Forgive us, gallant Friend.
Pierr. Nay, now y'have found
The way to melt and cast me as you will :
I'l fetch this Friend and give him to your mercy
Nay he shall dye if you will take him from me
For your repose I'll quit my hearts Jewel;
But would not have him torn away by Villains
And spitefull villany. *Spino.*

* 4to 1696 reads "to."

Spino. No; may you both
For ever live and fill the world with fame!
Pier. Now you are too kind. Whence rose all this discord?
Oh what a dangerous precipice have we scap'd!
How near a fall was all we had long been building!
What an eternal blot had stain'd our glories,
If one the bravest and the best of men
Had fallen a Sacrifice to rash suspicion!
Butcher'd by those whose Cause he came to cherish:
Oh could you know him all as I have known him,
How good he is, how just, how true, how brave,
You wou'd not leave this place till you had seen him;
Humbled your selves before him, kiss'd his feet,
And gain'd remission for the worst of follies;
Come but to morrow all your doubts shall end,
And to your Loves me better recommend,
That I've preserv'd your Fame, and, sav'd my Friend.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

The end of the third Act.

ACT IV.

Enter Jaffeir *and* Belvidera.

Jaff. WHERE dost thou lead me? Every step I move,
Methinks I tread upon some mangled Limb
Of a rack'd Friend: Oh my dear charming ruine!
Where are we wandring?
Belv. To eternal Honour;
To do a deed shall Chronicle thy name,
Among the glorious Legends of those few
That have sav'd sinking Nations: thy Renown
Shall be the future Song of all the Virgins,
Who by thy piety have been preserv'd
From horrid violation: Every Street
Shall be adorn'd with Statues to thy honour,
And at thy feet this great Inscription written,
Remember him that prop'd the fall of Venice.
Jaff. Rather, Remember him, who after all
The sacred Bonds of Oaths and holyer Friendship
In fond compassion to a Womans tears
Forgot his Manhood, Vertue, truth and Honour,
To sacrifice the Bosom that reliev'd him. Why

Why wilt thou damn me?
Belv. Oh inconstant Man!
How will you promise? how will you deceive?
Do, return back, re-place me in my Bondage,
Tell all thy Friends how dangerously thou lov'st me;
And let thy Dagger doe its bloudy office,
Oh that kind Dagger, *Jaffeir*, how twill look
Stuck through my heart, drench'd in my bloud to th' hilts!
Whilst these poor dying eyes shall with their tears
No more torment thee, then thou wilt be free:
Or if thou think'st it nobler, Let me live
Till I am a Victim to the hatefull lust
Of that Infernal Devil, that old Fiend
That's Damn'd himself and wou'd undoe Mankind:
Last night, my Love!
Jaff. Name, name it not again,
It shews a beastly Image to my fancy;
Will wake me into madness. Oh the Villain!
That durst approach such purity as thine
On terms so vile: Destruction, swift destruction
Fall on my Coward-head, and make my Name
The common scorn of Fools if I forgive him;
If I forgive him, if I not revenge
With utmost rage and most unstaying fury,
Thy suffering thou dear darling of my life, Love.*
Bel. Delay no longer then, but to the Senate;
And tell the dismalst story e'r utter'd,
Tell 'em what bloudshed, rapines, desolations,
Have been prepar'd, how near's the fatal hour!
Save thy poor Country, save the Reverend bloud
Of all its Nobles, which to morrows Dawn
Must else see shed: Save the poor tender lives
Of all those little Infants which the Swords
Of murtherers are whetting for this moment;
Think thou already heard'st their dying screams,
Think that thou seest their sad distracted Mothers
Kneeling before thy feet, and begging pity
With torn dishevel'd hair and streaming eyes,
Their naked mangled breasts besmear'd with bloud,
And even the Milk with which their fondled Babes,
Softly they hush'd; dropping in anguish from 'em.
Think thou seest this, and then consult thy heart.
Jaff. Oh!
Bel. Think too, If thou lose this present minute,
What miseries the next day bring upon thee.
Imagine all the horrours of that night
Murther and Rapine, Waste and Desolation, Confusedly

* "Love" is omitted in 4to 1704.

Confusedly ranging. Think what then may prove
My Lot! the Ravisher may then come safe,
And midst the terrour of the publick ruine
Doe a damn'd deed; perhaps to lay a Train
May catch thy life; then where will be revenge,
The dear revenge that's due to such a wrong?
Jaff. By all Heavens powers Prophetick truth dwells in thee,
For every word thou speak'st strikes through my heart
Like a new light, and shows it how 't has wander'd;
Just what th' hast made me, take me, *Belvidera*,
And lead me to the place where I'm to say
This bitter Lesson, where I must betray
My truth, my vertue, constancy and friends:
Must I betray my friends! Ah take me quickly,
Secure me well before that thought's renew'd;
If I relapse once more, all's lost for ever.
Bel. Hast thou a friend more dear than *Belvidera?*
Jaff. No, th' art my Soul itself, wealth, friendship, honour,
All present joys, and earnest of all future,
Are summ'd in thee: methinks when in thy armes
Thus leaning on thy breast, one minute's more
Than a long thousand years of vulgar hours.
Why was such happiness not given me pure?
Why dash'd with cruel wrongs, and bitter wantings?
Come, lead me forward now like a tame Lamb
To Sacrifice, thus in his fatal Garlands,
Deck'd fine and pleas'd, The wantons skips and plays,
Trots by the enticing flattering Priestess side,
And much transported with his little pride,
Forgets his dear Companions of the plain
Till by Her, bound, Hee's on the Altar layn
Yet then too hardly bleats, such pleasure's in the pain.

Enter Officer *and* 6 Guards.

Offic. Stand who goes there?
Bel. Friends.
Jaff. Friends, *Belvidera*! hide me from my Friends,
By Heaven I'd rather see the face of Hell,
Than meet the man I love.
Offic. But what friends are you?
Bel. Friends to the Senate and the State of *Venice.*
Offic. My orders are to seize on all I find
At this late hour, and bring 'em to the Council,
Who now are sitting.
Jaff. Sir, you shall be obey'd.
Hold, Brutes, stand off, none of your paws upon me.
Now the Lot's cast, and Fate do what thou wilt. *Exeunt guarded.*

SCENE

SCENE *The Senate-house,*

Where appear sitting, the Duke of Venice, Prinli,* Antonio,
And Eight other Senators.

Duke. Antony, Prinli, Senators of *Venice,*
Speak; why are we assembled here this night?
What have you to inform us of, concerns
The State of *Venice,* honour, or its safety?
Prin. Could words express the story I have to tell you,
Fathers, these tears were useless, these sad tears
That fall from my old eyes; but there is cause
We all should weep; tear off these purple Robes,
And wrap our selves in Sack-cloth, sitting down
On the sad Earth, and cry aloud to Heaven.
Heaven knows if yet there be an hour to come
E'r *Venice* be no more.
All Sentrs. How!
Prin. Nay we stand
Upon the Very brink of gaping ruine,
Within this City's formed a dark Conspiracy,
To massacre us all, our Wives and Children,
Kindred and Friends, our Palaces and Temples
To lay in Ashes: nay the hour too, fixt;
The Swords, for ought I know, drawn even this moment,
And the wild Waste begun: from unknown hands
I had this warning: but if we are men
Let's not be tamely butchered, but doe something
That may inform the world in after Ages,
Our Virtue was not ruin'd though we were. [*A noise without.*
Room, room, make room for some Prisoners—
2 *Senat.* Let's raise the City.

Enter Officer *and* Guard.

Prin. Speak there, what disturbance?
Offic. Two Prisoners have the Guard seiz'd in the Streets,
Who say they come to inform this Reverend Senate
About the present danger.

Enter Jaffeir *and* Belvidera *guarded.*

All. Give 'em entrance——
Well, who are you?
Jaff. A Villain.
Anto. Short and pithy.
The man speaks well. *Jaff.*

* From this point, a characteristic of the compositor employed on the last pages of the quarto of 1682 becomes clear. He mis-spells "Priuli" almost always "Prinli." His work, distinct from that of his brother compositors by the older traditions of spelling it preserves, begins on p. 33 in the first quarto (represented by p. 36 in this reprint), finishes the play, and includes the Dedication and Dramatis Personae. The mistake is corrected in the succeeding quartos.

Jaff. Would every man that hears me
Would deal so honestly, and own his title.
Duke. 'Tis rumour'd that a Plot has been contriv'd
Against this State; that you have a share in't too.
If you are a Villain, to redeem your honour,
Unfold the truth and be restor'd with Mercy.
Jaff. Think not that I to save my life come hither,
I know its value better; but in pity
To all those wretches whose unhappy dooms
Are fix'd and seal'd. You see me here before you,
The sworn and Covenanted foe of *Venice.*
But use me as my dealings may deserve
And I may prove a friend.
Duke. The Slave Capitulates,
Give him the Tortures.
Jaff. That you dare not do,
Your fears won't let you, nor the longing Itch
To hear a story which you dread the truth of.
Truth with the fear of smart shall ne'r get from me.
Cowards are scar'd with threatnings. Boys are whipt
Into confessions: but a Steady mind
Acts of its self, ne'r asks the body Counsell.
Give him the Tortures. Name but such a thing
Again; by Heaven I'll shut these lips for ever,
Not all your Racks, your Engines or your Wheels
Shall force a groan away—— that you may guess at.
Anto. A bloudy minded fellow I'll warrant;
A damn'd bloudy minded fellow.
Duke. Name your Conditions.
Jaff. For my self full pardon,
Besides the lives of two and twenty friends [*Delivers a list.*
Whose names are here inroll'd: Nay, let their Crimes
Be ne'r so monstrous, I must have the Oaths
And sacred promise of this Reverend Council,
That in a full Assembly of the Senate
The thing I ask be ratifi'd. Swear this,
And I'll unfold the secrets of your danger.
All. We'll swear.
Duke. Propose the Oath.
Jaff. By all the hopes
Ye have of Peace and Happiness hereafter,
Swear.
All. We all swear,
Jaff. To grant me what I've ask'd,
Ye swear.
All. We swear.
Jaff. And as ye keep the Oath, May

May you and your posterity be blest
Or curst for ever.
All. Else be curst for ever.
Jaff. —Then here's the list, and with't the full disclose of all that threatens you. } *Delivers another paper.*
Now Fate thou hast caught me.
Anto. Why what a dreadfull Catalogue of Cut-throats is here! I'll warrant you not one of these fellows but has a face like a Lion. I dare not so much as reade their names over.
Duke. Give orders that all diligent search be made
To seize these men, their characters are publick,
The paper intimates their Rendevouz
To be at the house of a fam'd Grecian Curtezan
Call'd *Aquilina*; see that place secured.
Anto. What my Nicky Nacky, Hurry Durry, Nicky Nacky in the Plot—I'll make a Speech. Most noble Senators,
What headlong apprehension drives you on,
Right noble, wise and truly solid Senators,
To violate the Laws and right of Nations?
The Lady is a Lady of renown.
'Tis true, she hold a house of fair Reception,
And though I say't my self, as many more
Can say as well as I.
2 *Senat.* My Lord, long Speeches
Are frivolous here, when dangers are so near us;
We all well know your Interest in that Lady,
The world talks loud on't.
Anto. Verily, I have done,
I say no more.
Duke. But since he has declar'd
Himself concern'd, Pray, Captain, take great caution
To treat the fair one, as becomes her Character,
And let her Bed-chamber be search'd with decency.
You, *Jaffeir*, must with patience bear till morning, to be our Prisoner.
Jaff. Would the Chains of death
Had bound me fast e'r I had known this minute,
I've done a deed will make my Story hereafter
Quoted in competition with all ill ones:
The History of my wickedness shall run
Down through the low traditions of the vulgar,
And Boys be thought* to tell the tale of *Jaffeir*.
Duke. Captain withdraw your Prisoner.
Jaff. Sir, if possible,
Lead me where my own thoughts themselves may lose me,
Where I may doze out what I've left of life,
Forget my self and this day's guilt and falsehood, Cruel

* 4to 1704 reads "taught."

Cruel remembrance how shall I appease thee! [*Ex. guarded.*

Noise without.

More Traitors; room, room, make room there,
Duke. How's this, Guards?
Where are our Guards? shut up the Gates, the Treason's already at our Dores.

Enter Officer.

Offic. My Lords, more Traitors?
Seiz'd in the very act of Consultation;
Furnish'd with Arms and Instruments of mischief,
Bring in the prisoners.

Enter Peirre, Renault, Theodore, Elliot, Revellido, *and other Conspirators, in fetters, guarded.*

Peirr. You, my Lords and Fathers,
(As you are pleas'd to call your selves) of *Venice*;
If you sit here to guide the course of Justice,
Why these disgracefull chains upon the limbs
That have so often labour'd in your service?
Are these the wreaths of triumphs ye bestow
On those that bring you Conquests home and Honours?
Duke. Go on, you shall be heard, Sir.
Anto. And be hang'd too, I hope.
Peirr. Are these the Trophies I've deserv'd for fighting
Your Battels with confederated Powers,
When winds and Seas conspir'd to overthrow you?
And brought the Fleets of *Spain* to your own Harbours,
When you, great Duke, shrunk trembling in your Palace;
And saw your Wife, th' Adriatick, plough'd
Like a lew'd Whore by bolder Prows than yours
Stept not I forth, and taught your loose Venetians,
The task of honour and the way to greatness,
Rais'd you from your capitulating fears
To stipulate the terms of su'd for peace,
And this my recompence? If I am a Traitor
Produce my charge; or shew the wretch that's base enough
And brave enough to tell me I am a Traitor.
Duke. Know you one *Jaffeir.* [*All the conspirators murmur.*
Peirr. Yes, and know his Vertue,
His Justice, Truth, his general Worth and Sufferings
From a hard father taught me first to love him.

Enter Jaffeir *guarded.*

Duke. See him brought forth.
Peirr. My friend too bound? nay then
Our Fate has conquer'd us, and we must fall, Why

Why droops the man whose welfare's so much mine
They're but one thing ? these Reverend Tyrants, *Jaffeir*,
Call us all Traitors, art thou one, my Brother ?
Jaff. To thee I am the falsest, veryest slave
That e'r betray'd a generous trusting friend,
And gave up honour to be sure of ruine.
All our fair hopes which morning was to have crown'd
Has this curst tongue o'rthrown.
Peirr. So, then all's over :
Venice has lost her freedom ; I my life ;
No more, farewell.
Duke. Say, will you make confession
Of your vile deeds and trust the Senates mercy ?
Peirr. Curst be your Senate : Curst your Constitution :
The Curse of growing factions and division
Still vex your Councils, shake your public safety,
And make the Robes of Government, you wear,
Hatefull to you, as these base Chains to me.
Duke. Pardon or Death.
Peirr. Death, honourable death.
Renault. Death's the best thing we ask or you can give.
All Conspir. No shamefull bonds, but honourable death.
Duke. Break up the Council : Captain, guard your prisoners.
Jaffeir, y' are free, but these must wait for judgment.
[*Ex. all the Senators.*
Peirr. Come, where's my Dungeon ? lead me to my straw :
It will not be the first time I've lodg'd hard
To doe your Senate service.
Jaff. Hold one moment.
Peirr. Who's he disputes the Judgment of the Senate ?
Presumptuous Rebel—on— [*Strikes* Jaff.
Jaff. By Heaven you stir not.
I must be heard, I must have leave to speak ;
Thou hast disgrac'd me, *Peirre*, by a vile blow :
Had not a dagger done thee nobler justice ?
But use me as thou wilt, thou canst not wrong me,
For I am fallen beneath the basest injuries ;
Yet look upon me with an eye of mercy,
With pity and with charity behold me ;
Shut not thy heart against a friend's repentance,
But as there dwells a God-like nature in thee
Listen with mildness to my supplications.
Peirr. What whining Monk art thou ? what holy cheat
That wou'dst encroach upon my credulous ears
And cant'st thus vilely ? hence, I know thee not,
Dissemble and be nasty : leave me, Hippocrite.
Jaff. Not know me, *Peirre* ? *Pierr.*

Peirr. No, know the not: what art thou?
Jaff. *Jaffeir*, thy friend, thy once lov'd, valu'd friend!
Though now deservedly scorn'd, and us'd most hardly.
Peirr. Thou *Jaffeir*! Thou my once lov'd, valu'd friend?
By Heavens thou ly'st; the man, so call'd, my friend,
Was generous, honest, faithfull, just and valiant,
Noble in mind, and in his person lovely,
Dear to my eyes and tender to my heart:
But thou a wretched, base, false, worthless Coward,
Poor even in Soul, and loathsome in thy aspect,
All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee.
Prithee avoid, nor longer cling thus round me.
Like something banefull, that my nature's chill'd at.
Jaff. I have not wrong'd thee, by these tears I have not.
But still am honest, true, and hope too, valiant;
My mind still full of thee: therefore still noble,
Let not thy eyes then shun me, nor thy heart
Detest me utterly; Oh look upon me
Look back and see my sad sincere submission!
How my heart swells, as even 'twould burst my bosom;
Fond of its Gaol, and labouring to be at thee!
What shall I doe? what say to make thee hear me?
Peirr Hast thou not wrong'd me? dar'st thou call thy self,
Jaffeir, that once lov'd, valued friend of mine,
And swear thou hast not wrong'd me? whence these chains?
Whence the vile death, which I may meet this moment?
Whence this dishonour, but from thee, thou false one?
Jaff. — All's true, yet grant one thing, and I've done asking.
Peirr. What's that?
Jaff. To take thy life on such conditions
The Council have propos'd: Thou and thy friends
May yet live long, and to be better treated.
Peirr. Life! ask my life! confess! record my self
A villain for the privilege to breath,
And carry up and down this cursed City
A discontented and repining spirit,
Burthensome to itself a few years longer,
To lose, it may be, at last in a lewd quarrel
For some new friend, treacherous and false as thou art!
No, this vile world and I have long been jangling,
And cannot part on better terms than now,
When onely men like thee are fit to live in't.
Jaff. By all that's just—
Peirr. Swear by some other powers
For thou hast broke that sacred Oath too lately.
Jaff. Then by that hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,
Till to thy self at least, thou'rt reconcil'd, However

However thy resentment deal with me.
Peirr. Not leave me!
Jaff. No, thou shalt not force me from thee,
Use me reproachfully, and like a slave,
Tread on me, buffet me, heap wrongs on wrongs
On my poor head; I'll bear it all with patience,
Shall weary out thy most unfriendly cruelty.
Lie at thy feet and kiss 'em though they spurn me,
Till, wounded by my sufferings, thou relent,
And raise me to thy armes with dear forgiveness.
Peirr. Art thou not
Jaff. What?
Peirr. A Traitor?
Jaff. Yes.
Peirr. A Villain?
Jaff. Granted.
Pierr. A Coward, a most scandalous Coward,
Spiritless, void of honour, one who has sold
Thy everlasting Fame, for shameless life?
Jaff. All, all, and more, much more: my faults are Numberless.
Peirr And wouldst thou have me live on terms like thine?
Base as thou art false—
Jaff. No, 'tis to me that's granted.
The safety of thy life was all I aim'd at,
In recompence for faith, and trust so broken.
Peirr. I scorn it more because preserv'd by thee,
And as when first my foolish heart took pity
On thy misfortunes, sought thee in thy miseries,
Reliev'd thy wants, and rais'd thee from thy State
Of wretchedness in which thy fate had plung'd thee,
To rank thee in my list of noble friends;
All I receiv'd in surety for thy truth,
Were unregarded oaths; and this, this dagger,
Given with a worthless pledge, thou since hast stoln,
So I restore it back to thee again,
Swearing by all those powers which thou hast violated,
Never from this curs'd hour to hold communion,
Friendship or interest with thee, though our years
Were to exceed those limited the world.
Take it—farewell—for now I owe thee nothing.
Jaff. Say thou wilt live then.
Peirre. For my life, dispose it
Just as thou wilt, because tis what I'em tir'd with.
Jaff. Oh, *Peirre*!
Peirr. No more.
Jaff. My eyes won't lose the sight of thee,
But languish after thine, and ake with gazing. *Peirr.*

Peirr. Leave me—Nay, then thus, thus, I throw thee from me
And curses, great as is thy falsehood, catch thee.
Jaff. Amen.
He's gone, my father, friend, preserver,
And here's the portion he has left me. [*Holds the dagger up.*
This dagger, well remembred, with this dagger
I gave a solemn vow of dire importance,
Parted with this and *Belvidera* together ;
Have a care, Mem'ry, drive that thought no farther ;
No, I'll esteem it as a friend's last legacy,
Treasure it up in this wretched bosom,
Where it may grow acquainted with my heart,
That when they meet, they start not from each other ;
So ; now for thinking : A blow, call'd Traitor, Villain,
Coward, dishonourable coward, fogh !
Oh for a long sound sleep, and so forget it !
Down, busie Devil.—

Enter Belvidera.

Bel. Whither shall I fly ?
Where hide me and my miseries together ?
Where's now the Roman Constancy I boasted ?
Sunk into trembling fears and desperation !
Not daring now to look up to that dear face
Which us'd to smile even on my faults, but down
Bending these miserable eyes to earth,
Must move in penance, and implore much Mercy.
Jaff. Mercy, kind Heaven has surely endless stores
Hoarded for thee of blessings yet untasted ;
Let wretches loaded hard with guilt as I am,
Bow the weight and groan beneath the burthen,
Creep with a remnant of that strength th' have left,
Before the footstool of that Heaven th' have injur'd.
Oh *Belvidera* ! I'm the wretchedst creature
E'r crawl'd on earth : now if thou hast Vertue help me,
Take me into thy Armes, and speak the words of peace
To my divided Soul, that wars within me,
And raises every Sense to my confusion ;
By Heav'n I am tottering on the very brink
Of Peace ; and thou art all the hold I've left,
Bel. Alass ! I know thy sorrows are most mighty ;
I know th' hast cause to mourn ; to mourn, my *Jaffeir*,
With endless cries, and never ceasing wailings,
Th' hast lost—
Jaff. Oh I have lost what can't be counted ;
My friend too, *Belvidera*, that dear friend,
Who, next to thee, was all my health rejoyc'd in,
Has us'd me like a slave ; shamefully us'd me ; 'Twould

'Twould break thy pitying heart to hear the story,
What shall I doe ? resentment, indignation,
Love, pity, fear and mem'ry, how I've wrong'd him,
Distract my quiet with the very thought on't,
And tear my heart to pieces in my bosome.
Bel. What has he done ?
Jaff. Thou'dst hate me, should I tell thee.
Bel. Why ?
Jaff. Oh he has us'd me! yet by Heaven I bear it :
He has us'd me, *Belvidera*, but first swear
That when I've told thee, thou'lt not loath me utterly,
Though vilest blots and stains appear upon me ;
But still at least with charitable goodness,
Be near me in the pangs of my affliction,
Not scorn me, *Belvidera*, as he has done.
Bel. Have I then e'r been false that now I am doubted ?
Speak, whats the cause I am grown into distrust,
Why thought unfit to hear my Love's complaining ?
Jaff. Oh !
Bel. Tell me.
Jaff. Bear my failings for they are many,
Oh my dear Angel ! in that friend I've lost
All my Soul's peace ; for every thought of him
Strikes my Sense hard, and deads it in my brains ;
Wouldst thou believe it ?
Bel. Speak
Jaff. Before we parted,
E'r yet his Guards had led him to his prison,
Full of severest sorrows for his suff'rings,
With Eyes o'rflowing and a bleeding heart,
Humbling myself almost beneath my nature,
As at his feet I kneel'd, and su'd for mercy,
Forgetting all our friendship, all the dearness,
In which w' have liv'd so many years together,
With a reproachfull hand, he dash'd a blow,
He struck me, *Belvidera*, by Heaven, he struck me,
Buffeted, call'd me Traitor, Villain, Coward ;
Am I a Coward ? am I a Villain ? tell me :
Th' art the best Judge, and mad'st me, if I am so,
Damnation ; Coward !
Bel. Oh ! forgive him, *Jaffeir.*
And if his sufferings wound thy heart already,
What will they doe to-morrow ?
Jaff. Hah !
Bel. To-morrow,
When thou shalt see him stretch'd in all the Agonies
Of a tormenting and a shameful death,

His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs,
Insulted o'r by a vile butchering villain ;
What will thy heart doe then ? Oh sure't will stream
Like my eyes now.
Jaff. What means thy dreadfull story ?
Death, and to-morrow ? broken limbs and bowels ?
Insulted o'r by a vile butchering Villain ?
By all my fears I shall start out to madness,
With barely guessing if the truth's hid longer.
Bel. The faithless Senators, 'tis they've decree'd it :
They say according to our friends request,
They shall have death, and not ignoble bondage :
Declare their promis'd mercy all as forfeited,
False to their oaths, and deaf to intercession ;
Warrants are pass'd for publick death to-morrow.
Jaff. Death ! doom'd to die ! condemn'd unhear'd ! unpleaded !
Bel. Nay, cruell'st racks and torments are preparing,
To force confessions from their dying pangs ;
Oh do not look so terribly upon me,
How your lips shake, and all your face disorder'd !
What means my Love ?
Jaff. Leave me, I charge thee leave me—strong temptations
Wake in my heart.
Bel. For what ?
Jaff. No more, but leave me.
Bel. Why ?
Jaff. Oh ! by Heaven I love thee with that fondness
I would not have thee stay a moment longer,
Near these curst hands ; are they not cold upon thee ?
Bel. No, everlasting comfort's in thy Armes
To lean thus on thy breast is softer ease
Than downy pillows deck'd with leaves of roses. } *Pulls the dagger half out of his bosom and puts it back agen.*
Jaff. Alas thou thinkest not of the thorns 'tis fill'd with,
Fly e'r they call thee : there's a lurking serpent
Ready to leap and sting thee to thy heart ;
Art thou not terrifi'd ?
Bel. No.
Jaff. Call to mind,
What thou hast done, and whither thou hast brought me.
Bel. Hah !
Jaff. Where's my friend ? my friend, thou smiling mischief ?
Nay, shrink not, now 'tis too late, thou shouldst have fled
When thy Guilt first had cause, for dire revenge,
Is up and raging for my friend. He groans,
Hark how he groans, his screams are in my ears
Already ; see, th' have fixt him on the wheel,
And now they tear him—Murther ! perjur'd Senate ! Murther

Murther—Oh !—hark thee, Traitress, thou hast done this :
Thanks to thy tears and false perswading love, } *Fumbling for his*
How her eyes speak! Oh thou bewitching creature ! } *Dagger.*
Madness cannot hurt thee : Come, thou little trembler,
Creep, even into my heart, and there lie safe :
'Tis thy own Cittadel—hah—yet stand off,
Heaven must have Justice, and my broken vows
Will sink me else beneath its reaching mercy ;
I'll wink and then 'tis done—

Bel. What means the Lord
Of me, my life and love, what's in thy bosom,
Thou graspst at so ? nay, why am I thus treated ? } *Draws the dagger,*
What wilt thou doe ? Ah, do not kill me, *Jaffeir*, } *offers to stab her.*
Pity these panting breasts, and trembling limbs,
That us'd to clasp thee when thy looks were milder,
That yet hang heavy on my unpurg'd Soul,
And plunge it not into eternal darkness.

Jaff. No, *Belvidera*, when we parted last
I gave this dagger with thee as in trust
To be thy portion, if I e'r prov'd false.
On such condition was my truth believ'd :
But now 'tis forfeited and must be paid for. [*Offers to stab her again*

Bel. Oh, mercy ! [*Kneeling.*

Jaff. Nay, no strugling.

Bel. Now then kill me. [*Leaps upon his neck and kisses him.*
While thus I cling about thy cruel neck,
Kiss thy revengefull lips and die in joys
Greater than any I can guess hereafter.

Jaff. I am, I am a Coward ; witness't, Heaven,
Witness it, Earth, and every being Witness ;
'Tis but one blow yet : by immortal Love,
I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee, } *He throws away the*
The Seal of providence is sure upon thee. } *dagger and embraces*
And thou wert born for yet unheard of wonders: *her.*
Oh thou wert either born to save or damn me !
By all the power that's given thee o'r my Soul,
By thy resistless tears and conquering smiles,
By the victorious love that still waits on thee ;
Fly to thy cruel Father : save my friend,
Or all our future Quiet's lost for ever :
Fall at his feet, cling round his reverend knees ;
Speak to him with thy Eyes, and with thy tears,
Melt thy hard heart, and wake dead nature in him,
Crush him in th' Arms, and torture him with thy softness :
Nor, till thy Prayers are granted, set him free,
But conquer him, as thou hast vanquish'd me. [*Ex. ambo.*

The end of the fourth Act.

ACT V.

Enter Prinli *solus.*

Prinli. WHY, cruel Heaven, have my unhappy days
Been lengthen'd to this sad one? Oh! dishonour
And deathless infamy is fall'n upon me.
Was it my fault? Am I a traitour? No.
But then, my onely child, my daughter, wedded;
There my best bloud runs foul, and a disease
Incurable has seiz'd upon my memory,
To make it rot and stink to after ages.
Curst be the fatal minute when I got her;
Or woud that I'd been anything but man,
And rais'd an issue which wou'd ne'r have wrong'd me.
The miserablest Creatures (man excepted)
Are not the less esteemed, though their posterity
Degenerate from the vertues of their fathers;
The vilest Beasts are happy in their off-springs,
While only man gets traitours, whores and villains.
Curst be the names, and some swift blow from Fate
Lay his head deep, where mine may be forgotten.

Enter Belvidera *in a long mourning Veil.*

Bel. He's there, my father, my inhumane father,
That, for three years, has left an onely child
Expos'd to all the outrages of Fate,
And cruel ruin— oh!—

Prin. What child of sorrow
Art thou that com'st thus wrapt in weeds of sadness,
And mov'st as if thy steps were towards a grave?

Bel. A wretch, who from the very top of happiness
Am fallen into the lowest depths of misery,
And want your pitying hand to raise me up again.

Prin. Indeed thou talk'st as thou hadst tasted sorrows;
Would I could help thee.

Bel. 'Tis greatly in your power,
The world too, speaks you charitable, and I,
Who ne'r ask'd almes before, in that dear hope
Am come a begging to you, Sir.

Prin. For what?

Bel. Oh, well regard me, is this voice a strange one?
Consider too, when beggars once pretend
A case like mine, no little will content 'em.

Prin. What wouldst thou beg for?

Bel. Pity and forgiveness; [*Throws up her veil.*
By the kind tender names of child and father, Hear

Hear my complaints and take me to your love.
Prin. My daughter?
Bel. Yes, your daughter, by a mother
Vertuous and noble, faithfull to your honour,
Obedient to your will, kind to your wishes,
Dear to your armes, by all the joys she gave you,
When in her blooming years she was your treasure,
Look kindly on me; in my face behold
The lineaments of hers y'have kiss'd so often,
Pleading the cause of your poor cast-off Child.
Prin. Thou art my daughter.
Bel. Yes—And y'have oft told me
With smiles of love and chaste paternal kisses,
I'd much resemblance of my mother.
Prin. Oh!
Hadst thou inherited her matchless vertues
I'd been too bless'd.
Bel. Nay, do not call to memory,
My disobedience, but let pity enter
Into your heart, and quite deface the impression;
For could you think how mine's perplext, what sadness
Fears and despairs distract the peace within me,
Oh, you woud take me in your dear, dear Armes,
Hover with strong compassion o'r your young one,
To shelter me with a protecting wing,
From the black gather'd storm, that's just, just breaking.
Prin. Don't talk thus.
Bel. Yes, I must, and you must hear too.
I have a husband.
Prin. Damn him.
Bel. Oh, do not curse him!
He would not speak so hard a word towards you.
On any terms, oh! e'r he deal with me.
Prin. Hah! what means my child?
Bel. Oh there's but this short moment
'Twixt me and Fate, yet send me not with curses
Down to my grave, afford me one kind blessing
Before we part: just take me in your armes,
And recommend me with a prayer to Heaven,
That I may dye in peace, and when I'm dead—
Prin. How my Soul's catcht?
Bel. Lay me, I beg you, lay me
By the dear ashes of my tender mother.
She would have pitied me, had fate yet spared her.
Prin. By Heaven, my aking heart forebodes much mischief,
Tell me thy story, for I'm still thy father.
Bel. No, I'm contented. *Prin*

Prin. Speak.
Bel. No matter.
Prin. Tell me.
By you, blest Heaven, my heart runs o'r with fondness.
Bel. Oh!
Prin. Utter't.
Bel. Oh my husband, my dear husband
Carries a dagger in his once kind bosome.
To peirce the heart of your poor *Belvidera.*
Prin. Kill thee?
Bel, Yes, kill me, when he pass'd his faith
And covenant, against your State and Senate,
He gave me up as hostage for his truth,
With me a dagger and a dire commission,
When e'r he fail'd to plunge it through this bosome,
I learnt the danger, chose the hour of love
T' attempt his heart, and bring it back to honour,
Great love prevail'd and bless'd me with success,
He came, confest, betray'd his dearest friends
For promis'd mercy; now they're doom'd to suffer,
Gall'd with remembrance of what then was sworn,
If they are lost, he vows t'appease the Gods
With this poor life, and make my blood th' attonement.
Prin. Heavens!
Bel. Think you saw what pass'd at our last parting;
Think you beheld him like a raging lion,
Pacing the earth and tearing up his steps,
Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain
Of burning fury; think you saw his one hand
Fix't on my throat, while the extended other
Grasp'd a keen threatning dagger, oh 'twas thus
We last embrac'd, when, trembling with revenge,
He dragg'd me to the ground, and at my bosome
Presented horrid death, cried out, my friends,
Where are my friends? swore, wept, rag'd, threaten'd, lov'd,
For he yet lov'd, and that dear love preserv'd me,
To this last tryal of a father's pity.
I fear not death, but cannot bear a thought
That that dear hand should do th' unfriendly office;
If I was ever then your care, now hear me;
Fly to the Senate, save the promis'd lives
Of his dear friends, e'r mine be made the sacrifice.
Prin. Oh! my hearts comfort!
Bel. Will you not, my father?
Weep not but answer me.
Prin. By Heaven, I will.
Not one of 'em but what shall be immortal.

Canst thou forgive me all my follies past,
I'll henceforth be indeed a father ; never,
Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,
Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,
Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'r thee,
Peace to thy heart. Farewell.

Bel. Go, and remember,
'Tis *Belvidera*'s life her father pleads for. [*Ex severally.*

Enter Antonio.

Hum, hum, hah,
Seignior *Prinli*, my Lord *Prinli*, my Lord, my Lord, my Lord : Now, we Lords love to call one another by our Titles. My Lord, my Lord, my Lord—Pox on him, I am a Lord as well as he ; and so let him fiddle—I'll warrant him he's gone to the Senate house, and I'll be there too, soon enough for somebody. Odd—here's a tickling speech about the Plot, I'll prove there's a Plot with a Vengeance—would I had it without book ; let me see—

Most Reverend Senatours,
That there is a Plot, surely by this time, no man that hath eyes or understanding in his head will presume to doubt, 'tis as plain as the light in the Cowcumber—no—hold there—Cowcumber does not come in yet—'tis as plain as the light in the Sun, or as the man in the Moon, even at noon day ; It is indeed a Pumpkin-Plot, which, just as it was mellow, we have gathered, and now we have gathered it, prepar'd and dress'd it, shall we throw it like a pickled Cowcumber out at the window ? no : that it is not onely a bloudy, horrid, execrable, damnable and audacious Plot, but it is, as I may so say, a sawcy Plot : and we all know, most Reverend Fathers, that what is sawce for a Goose is sawce for a Gander : Therefore, I say, as those bloud-thirsty Ganders of the conspiracy would have destroyed us Geese of the Senate, let us make haste to destroy them, so I humbly move for hanging—hah, hurry durry—I think this will doe, thô I was something out, at first, about the Sun and the Cowcumber.

Enter Aquilina.

Aquil. Good morrow, Senatour.

Anto. Nacky, my dear Nacky, morrow, Nacky, odd I am very brisk, very merry, very pert, very jovial—ha a a a a—kiss me Nacky ; how dost thou doe, my little Tory, rory Strumpet, kiss me, I say, hussy, kiss me.

Aquil. Kiss me, Nacky, hang you, Sir, Coxcomb, hang you, Sir.

Anto. Hayty, tayty, is it so indeed, with all my heart, faith—*Hey then up go we*, faith *—hey then up go we*, dum dum derum dump. [*Sings.*

Aquil. Seignior.

Anto. Madona

Aquil. Doe you intend to die in your bed—?

Anto. About threescore years hence, much may be done, my dear.

Aquil.

Aquil. You'll be hanged, Seignior.

Anto. Hang'd, sweetheart, prithee be quiet, hang'd quoth-a, that's a merry conceit, with all my heart, why thou jok'st, Nacky, thou art given to joking, I'll swear ; well, I protest, Nacky, nay, I must protest, and will protest that I love joking dearly, man. And I love thee for joking, and I'll kiss thee for joking, and towse thee for joking, and odd, I have a devilish mind to take thee aside about that business for joking too, odd I have, and *Hey then up go we,* dum dum derum dump. [*Sings.*

Aquil. See you this, Sir ? [*Draws a dagger.*

Anto. O Laud, a dagger ! Oh Laud ! it is naturally my aversion, I cannot endure the sight on't, hide it, for Heavens sake, I cannot look that way till it be gone—hide it, hide it, oh, oh, hide it !

Aquil. Yes, in your heart, I'll hide it.

Anto. My heart ; what, hide a dagger in my heart's bloud ?

Aquil. Yes, in thy heart, thy throat, thou pamper'd Devil ;
Thou hast help'd to spoil my peace, and I'll have vengeance
On thy curst life, for all the bloudy Senate,
The perjur'd faithless Senate : Where's my Lord,
My happiness, my love, my God, my Hero,
Doom'd by thy accursed tongue, amongst the rest,
'T a shamefull wrack ? By all the rage that's in me
I'll be whole years in murthering thee.

Anto. Why, Nacky,
Wherefore so passionate ? what have I done ? what's the matter, my dear Nacky ? am not I thy Love, thy Happiness, thy Lord, thy Hero, thy Senatour, and every thing in the World, Nacky ?

Aquil. Thou ! think'st thou, thou art fit to meet my joys ;
To bear the eager clasps of my embraces ?
Give me my *Peirre,* or—

Anto. Why, he's to be hang'd, little Nacky,
Trust up for Treason, and so forth, Child.

Aquil. Thou ly'st, stop down thy throat that hellish sentence.
Or 'tis thy last : swear that my Love shall live,
Or thou art dead.

Anto. Ah h h h.

Aquil. Swear to recal his doom,
Swear at my feet, and tremble at my fury.

Anto. I do, now if she would but kick a little bit, one kick now Ah h h h

Aquil. Swear, or—

Anto. I doe, by these dear fragrant foots
And little toes, sweet as, e e e e my Nacky Nacky Nacky.

Aquil. How !

Anto. Nothing but untie thy shoe-string a little faith and troth, That's all, that's all, as I hope to live, Nacky, that's all.

Aquil. Nay, then— *Anto.*

Anto. Hold, hold, thy Love, thy Lord, thy Hero
Shall be preserv'd and safe.
Aquil. Or may this Poniard
Rust in thy heart.
Anto. With all my soul.
Aquil. Farewell— [*Ex.* Aquil.
Anto. Adieu. Why what a bloudy-minded inveterate, termagant, Strumpet have I been plagu'd with ! oh h h yet more ! nay then I die, I die—I am dead already. [*Stretches himself out.*

Enter Jaffeir.

Jaff. Final destruction seize on all the world :
Bend down, ye Heavens, and shutting round this earth,
Crush the Vile Globe into its first confusion ;
Scorch it, with Elemental flames, to one curst Cindar,
And all us little creepers in't, call'd men,
Burn, burn to nothing : but let *Venice* burn
Hotter than all the rest : Here kindle Hell
Ne'r to extinguish, and let souls hereafter
Groan here, in all those pains which mine feels now.

Enter Belvidera.

Bel. My Life— [*Meeting him.*
Jaff. My Plague— [*Turning from her.*
Bel. Nay then I see my ruine,
If I must die !
Jaff. No, Death's this day too busie,
Thy Father's ill-time'd Mercy came too late,
I thank thee for thy labours thô and him too,
But all my poor betray'd unhappy friends
Have Summons to prepare for Fate's black hour ;
And yet I live.
Bel. Then be the next my doom.
I see thou hast pass'd my sentence in thy heart,
And I'll no longer weep or plead against it,
But with the humblest, most obedient patience
Meet thy dear hands, and kiss 'em when they wound me ;
Indeed I am willing, but I beg thee doe it
With some remorse, and where thou giv'st the blow,
View me with eyes of a relenting love,
And shew me pity, for 'twill sweeten Justice.
Jaff. Shew pity to thee ?
Bel. Yes, and when thy hands,
Charg'd with my fate, come trembling to the deed,
As thou hast done a thousand thousand dear times,
To this poor breast, when kinder rage has brought thee,
When our sting'd hearts have leap'd to meet each other,
And melting kisses seal'd our lips together,

When joys have left me gasping in thy armes,
So let my death come now, and I'll not shrink from't.
Jaff. Nay, *Belvidera*, do not fear my cruelty,
Nor let the thoghts of death perplex thy fancy,
But answer me to what I shall demand
With a firm temper and unshaken spirit.
Bel. I will when I've done weeping—
Jaff. Fie, no more on't—
How long is't since the miserable day
We wedded first—
Bel. Oh h h.
Jaff Nay, keep in thy tears,
Lest they un man me too.
Bel. Heaven knows I cannot;
The words you utter sound so very sadly
These streams will follow—
Jaff. Come, I'll kiss 'em dry then.
Bel. But, was't a miserable day?
Jaff. A curs'd one.
Bel. I thought it otherwise, and you've oft sworn
In the transporting hours of warmest love
When sure you spoke the truth, you've sworn you bless'd it,
Jaff. 'Twas a rash oath.
Bel. Then why am I not curs'd too?
Jaff. No, *Belvidera*; by th' eternal truth,
I doat with too much fondness.
Bel. Still so kind?
Still then do you you love me?
Jaff. Nature, in her workings,
Inclines not with more ardour to Creation,
Than I doe now towards thee: man ne'r was bless'd,
Since the first pair first met, as I have been.
Bel. Then sure you will not curse me.
Jaff. No, I'll bless thee.
I came on purpose, *Belvidera*, to bless thee.
'Tis now, I think, three years w'have liv'd together.
Bel. And may no fatal minute ever part us,
Till, reverend grown, for age and love, we go
Down to one Grave, as our last bed, together,
There sleep in peace till an eternal morning.
Jaff. When will that be? [*Sighing.*
Bel. I hope long Ages hence.
Jaff. Have I not hitherto (I beg thee tell me
Thy very fears), us'd thee with tender'st love?
Did e'r my Soul rise up in wrath against thee?
Did I e'r frown when *Belvidera* smil'd,
Or, by the least unfriendly word, betray A

A bating passion ? have I ever wrong'd thee ?
Bel. No.
Jaff. Has my heart, or have my eyes e'r wandred
To any other woman ?
Bel. Never, never—I were the worst of false ones should I accuse
I own I've been too happy, bless'd above [thee,
My Sexes Charter.
Jaff. Did I not say I came to bless thee ?
Bel. Yes.
Jaff. Then hear me, bounteous Heaven,
Pour down your blessings on this beauteous head,
Where everlasting sweets are always springing.
With a continual giving hand, let peace,
Honour and safety always hover round her,
Feed her with plenty, let her eyes ne'r see
A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know mourning,
Crown all her days with joys, her nights with rest,
Harmless as her own thoughts, and prop her vertue,
To bear the loss of one that too much lov'd,
And comfort her with patience in our parting.
Bel. How, parting parting !
Jaff. Yes, for ever parting,
I have sworn, *Belvidera* ; by yon Heaven,
That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee,
We part this hour for ever.
Bel. Oh, call back
Your cruel blessings, stay with me and curse me !
Jaff. No, 'Tis resolv'd.
Bel. Then hear me too, just Heaven,
Pour down your curses on this wretched head
With never-ceasing Vengeance, let despair,
Danger or infamy, nay all surround me,
Starve me with wantings, let my eyes ne'r see
A sight of comfort, nor my heart know peace,
But dash my days with sorrow, nights with horrours
Wild as my own thoughts now, and let loose fury
To make me mad enough for what I lose,
If I must lose him ; if I must, I will not.
Oh turn and hear me !
Jaff. Now hold, heart, or never.
Bel. By all the tender days we have liv'd together
By all our charming nights, and joyes that crown'd em,
Pity my sad condition, speak, but speak.
Jaff. Oh h h.
Bel. By these armes that now cling round thy neck,
By this dear kiss and by ten thousand more,
By these poor streaming eyes— *Jaff.*

Jaff. Murther! unhold me:
By th'immortal destiny that doom'd me [*Draws his dagger.*
To this curs'd minute, I'll not live one longer,
Resolve to let me go or see me fall—
Bel. Hold, Sir, be patient.
Jaff. Hark, the dismal Bell [*Passing bell towles.*
Towles out for death, I must attend its call too,
For my poor friend, my dying *Peirre* expects me,
He sent a message to require I'd see him
Before he dy'd, and take his last forgiveness.
Farewell for ever.
Bel. Leave thy dagger with me.
Bequeath me something—Not one kiss at parting? { *Going out*
Oh my poor heart, when wilt thou break? { *looks back*
Jaff. Yet stay, { *at her.*
We have a Child, as yet, a tender Infant.
Be a kind mother to him when I am gone,
Breed him in vertue and the paths of Honour,
But let him never know his father's story:
I charge thee guard him from the wrongs my Fate
May doe his future fortune or his name.
Now— nearer yet— [*Approaching each other.*
Oh that my armes were rivetted
Thus round thee ever! But my friends, my oath!
This and no more. [*Kisses her.*
Bel. Another, sure another,
For that poor little one you've ta'n care of,
I'll giv't him truly.
Jaff. So, now farewell.
Bel. For ever?
Jaff. Heaven knows for ever; all good Angels guard thee.
Bel. All ill ones sure had charge of me this moment,
Curst be my days, and doubly curst my nights,
Which I must now mourn out in widdow'd tears;
Blasted be every herb and fruit and tree,
Curst be the rain that falls upon the earth,
And may the general curse reach man and beast;
Oh give me daggers, fire or water,
How I could bleed, how burn, how drown the waves
Huzzing and booming round my sinking head,
Till I descended to the peacefull bottome!
Oh there's all quiet, here all rage and fury,
The Air's too thin, and pierces my weak brain,
I long for thick substantial sleep: Hell, hell,
Burst from the Centre, rage and roar aloud,
If thou art half so hot; so mad as I am.

Enter Priuli *and* Servants. Who's

Who's there? [*They seize her.*
Priu. Run, seize and bring her safely home,
Guard her as you would life: Alas poor creature!
Bel. What? to my husband then conduct me quickly,
Are all things ready? shall we dye most gloriously?
Say not a word of this to my old father.
Murmuring streams, soft shades, and springing flowers,
Lutes, Laurells, Seas of Milk, and ships of Amber. [*Ex.*

Scene opening discovers a Scaffold and a Wheel prepar'd for the executing of Pierre, *then enter other Officers,* Pierre *and Guards, a Friar, executioner and a great Rabble.*

Offic. Room room there—stand all by, make room for the Prisoner.
Pier. My friend not come yet?
Father. Why are you so obstinate?
Pier. Why you so troublesome, that a poor wretch
cannot dye in peace?
But you, like Ravens will be croaking round him—
Fath. Yet, Heaven—
Peir. I tell thee Heaven and I are friends,
I ne'r broke Peace with't yet, by cruel murthers,
Rapine or perjury, or vile deceiving,
But liv'd in moral Justice towards all men,
Nor am a foe to the most strong believers;
How e'r my own short-sighted Faith confine me.
Fath. But an all-seeing Judge—
Peir. You say my conscience
Must be mine accuser: I have search'd that Conscience,
And find no records there of crimes that scare me.
Fath. Tis strange you should want faith.
Peir. You want to lead
My Reason blindfold, like a hamper'd Lion,
Check'd of its nobler vigour then, when baited,
Down to obedient tameness, make it couch,
And shew strange tricks which you call signs of Faith.
So silly Souls are gull'd and you get money.
Away, no more: Captain, I would hereafter
This fellow write no lyes of my conversion,
Because he has crept upon my troubled hours.

Enter Jaffeir.

Jaff. Hold: Eyes, be dry;
Heart, strengthen me to bear
This hideous sight, and humble me, take
The last forgiveness of a dying friend,
Betray'd by my vile falshood, to his ruine. Oh

Oh *Peirre*!
Peir. Yet nearer.
Jaff. Crawling on my knees,
And prostrate on the earth, let me approach thee,
How shall I look up to thy injur'd face,
That always us'd to smile, with friendship, on me?
It darts an air of so much manly virtue,
That I, methinks, look little in thy sight,
And stripes are fitter for me than embraces.
Peir. Dear to my Armes, though thou hast undone my fame,
I cannot forget to love thee: prithee, *Jaffeir*,
Forgive that filthy blow my passion dealt thee;
I am now preparing for the land of peace,
And fain would have the charitable wishes
Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journy.
Jaff. Good! I am the vilest creature, worse than e'r
Suffer'd the shamefull Fate thou art going to taste of,
Why was I sent for to be us'd thus kindly?
Call, call me villain, as I am, describe
The foul complexion of my hatefull deeds,
Lead me to the Rack, and stretch me in thy stead,
I've crimes enough to give it its full load,
And doe it credit? Thou wilt but spoilt the use on't,
And honest men hereafter bear its figure
About 'em, as a charm from treacherous friendship.
Offic. The time grows short, your friends are dead already.
Jaff. Dead!
Peir. Yes, dead *Jaffeir*, they've all dy'd like men too,
Worthy their Character.
Jaff. And what must I doe?
Peir. Oh, *Jaffeir*!
Jaff. Speak, aloud thy burthen'd Soul,
And tell thy troubles to thy tortur'd friend.
Peir. Friend! Could'st thou yet be a Friend, a generous friend,
I might hope Comfort from thy noble sorrows,
Heav'n knows I want a Friend.
Jaff. And I a kind one,
That would not thus scorn my repenting Vertue,
Or think when he is to dye, my thoughts are idle.
Peir. No! live, I charge thee, *Jaffeir.*
Jaff. Yes, I will live,
But it shall be to see thy fall reveng'd
At such a rate, as *Venice* long shall groan for.
Peir. Wilt thou?
Jaff. I will, by Heav'n.
Peir. Then still thou'rt noble,
And I forgive thee, oh—yet—shall I trust thee? *Jaff.*

Jaff. No : I've been false already.
Peir. Dost thou love me ?
Jaff. Rip up my heart, and satisfie thy doubtings.
Peir. Curse on this weakness. [*He weeps.*
Jaff. Tears ! Amazement ! Tears !
I never saw thee melted thus before,
And know there's something lab'ring in thy bosom
That must have vent : Though I'm a Villain, tell me.
Peir. Seest thou that Engine ? [*Pointing to the Wheel.*
Jaff. Why ?
Peir. Is't fit a Soldier, who has liv'd with Honour,
Fought Nations Quarrels, and bin Crown'd with Conquest,
Be expos'd a common Carcase on a Wheel ?
Jaff. Hah !
Peir. Speak ! is't fitting ?
Jaff. Fitting ?
Peir. Yes, Is't fitting ?
Jaff. What's to be done ?
Peir. I'd have thee undertake
Something that's Noble, to preserve my Memory
From the disgrace that's ready to attaint it.
Offic. The day grows late, Sir
Peir. I'll make haste ! oh *Jaffeir*,
Though thou'st betray'd me, doe me some way Justice.
Jaff. No more of that : Thy wishes shall be satisfi'd,
I have a Wife, and she shall bleed, my Child too
Yield up his little Throat, and all t'ap- } *Going away* Peir.
pease thee— } *holds him.*
Peir. No—this—no more ! [*He whispers* Jaffeir.
Jaff. Hah ! is't then so ?
Peir. Most certainly.
Jaff. I'll do't.
Peir. Remember.
Offic. Sir.
Peir. Come, now I'm ready. } *He and* Jaffeir *ascend the Scaffold.*
Captain, you should be a Gentleman of honour.
Keep off the Rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my Fate, and dye with Decency.
Come ! [*Take off his Gown, Executioner prepares to bind him.*
Fath. Son !
Peir. Hence, Tempter.
Offic. Stand off, Priest.
Peir. I thank you, Sir.
You'll think on't. [*To* Jaffeir.
Jaff. 'Twon't grow stale before to-morrow.
Peir. Now, *Jaffeir* ! now I am going. Now ;—[*Executioner having bound him,*
Jaff. Have at thee,
Thou honest heart, then—here— [*Stabs him.*

And

And this is well too. [*Then stabs himself.*
Fath. Damnable Deed!
Peir. Now thou hast indeed been faithful.
This was done Nobly—We have deceived the Senate.
Jaff. Bravely.
Peir. Ha ha ha—oh oh— [*Dies.*
Jaff. Now, you curs'd Rulers,
Thus of the bloody' have shed I make Libation,
And sprinkl't mingling: May it rest upon you.
And all your Race: Be henceforth Peace a stranger
Within your Walls; let Plagues and Famine waste
Your Generations—oh poor *Belvidera*!
Sir, I have a wife, bear this in safety to her.
A Token that with my dying breath I blest her,
And the dear little Infant left behind me.
I am sick—I'm quiet— [Jaff. *dyes.*
Offic. Bear this news to the Senate,
And guard their Bodies till there's farther order:
Heav'n grant I dye so well— [*Scene shuts upon them.*

Soft Musick. Enter Belvidera *distracted, led by two of her Women,* Prinli *and Servants.*

Prin. Strengthen her heart with Patience, pitying Heav'n.
Belv. Come come come come come, Nay, come to bed!
Prithee my Love. The Winds! hark how they whistle?
And the Rain beats: oh how the weather shrinks me!
You are angry now, who cares? pish, no indeed.
Choose then, I say you shall not go, you shall not;
Whip your ill nature; get you gone then! oh, [Jaffeir's *Ghost rises*
Are you return'd? See, Father, here he's come agen,
Am I to blame to love him! oh thou dear one. [*Ghost sinks.*
Why do you fly me? are you angry still then?
Jaffeir! where art thou! Father, why do you doe thus!
Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's here somewhere.
Stand off I say! what gone? remember't Tyrant!
I may revenge myself for this trick one day. } *Enter Officer*
I'll do't—I'll do't! *Renault*'s a nasty fellow. } *and others.*
Hang him, hang him, hang him.
Prin. News, what news? [*Offic. whispers* Prin.
Offic. Most sad, Sir.
Jaffeir, upon the Scaffold, to prevent
A shamefull death, stab'd *Pierre*, and next himself:
Both fell together.
Prin. Daughter. } *The Ghost of* Jaff. *and* Peir. *rise*
Bel. Hah, look there! } *together both bloody.*
My Husband bloody, and his Friend too! Murther!
Who has done this? speak to me thou sad Vision. [*Ghosts sink.*

On

On these poor trembling Knees I beg it, Vanisht—
Here they went down ; Oh I'll dig, dig the Den up.
You shan't delude me thus. Hoa, *Jaffeir*, *Jaffeir*,
Peep up and give me but a look. I have him !
I've got him Father : Oh now how I'll smuggle him !
My Love ! my Dear ! my Blessing ! help me, help me !
They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom.
Nay—now they pull so hard—farewell— [*She dyes.*

Maid. She's dead.
Breathless and dead.

Prin. Then guard me from the sight on't ;
Lead me into some place that's fit for mourning ;
Where the free Air, Light and the chearfull Sun
May never enter : Hang it round with Black ;
Set up one Taper that may last a day
As long as I've to live : and there leave me.
Sparing no Tears when you this Tale relate,
But Bid all Cruel Fathers dread my Fate. Curtain falls.
[*Ex. omnes.*

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